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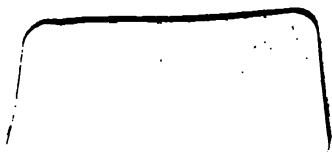
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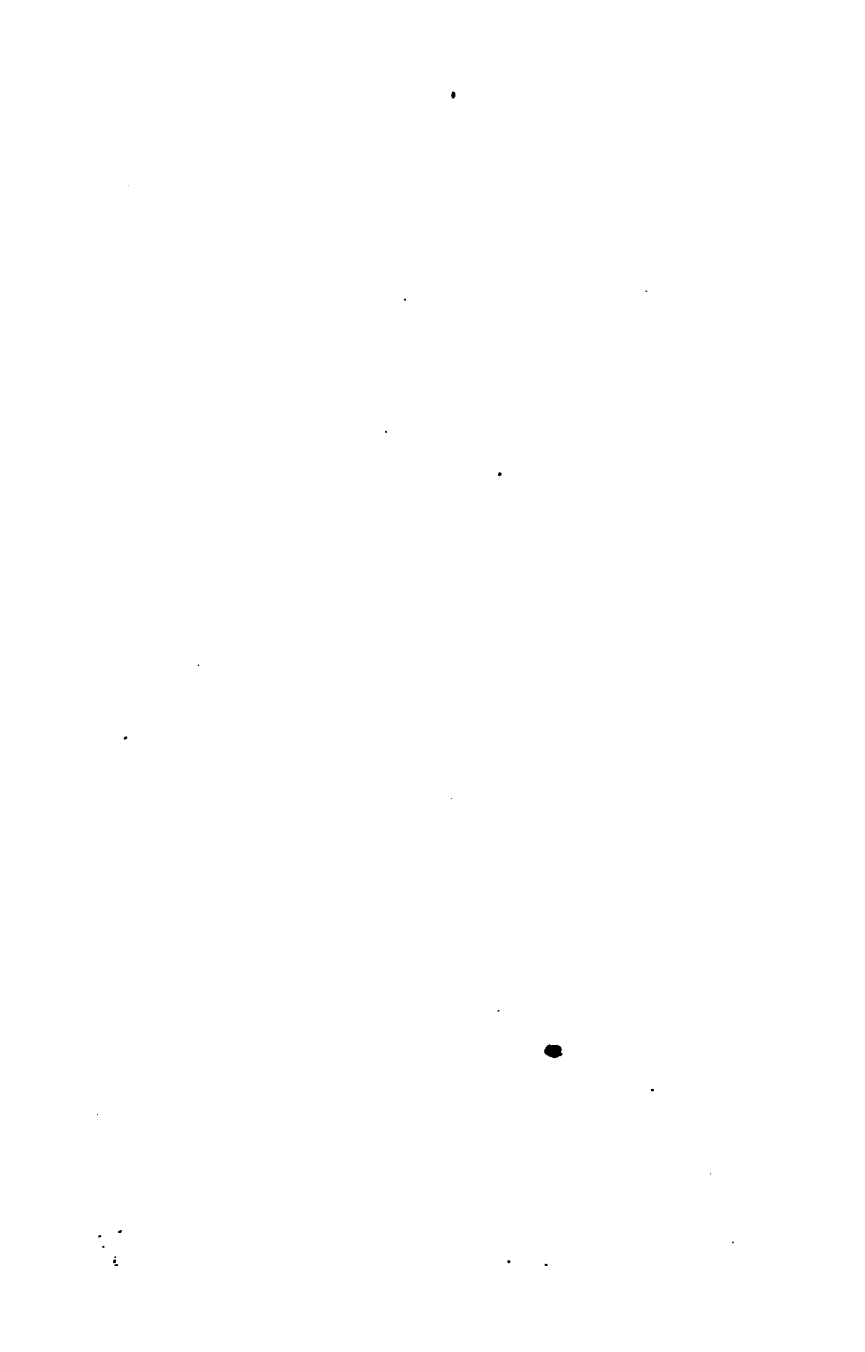
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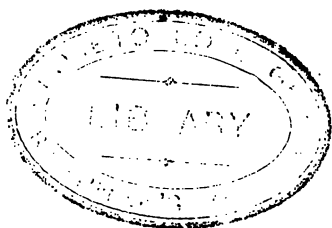
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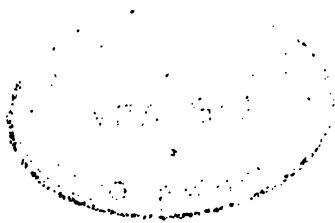
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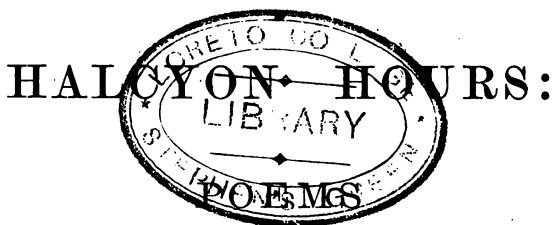




HALCYON HOURS.



LONDON:
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BY
KENELM HENRY DIGBY, Esq.,
AUTHOR OF
"THE BROADSTONE OF HONOUR," "MORES CATHOLICI," &c.



London,
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HALCYON HOURS.

THE PRELUDE.

STRANGER, oh, come to an Eden-like shore,
Where storms and billows will trouble no more!
Peaceful the shore of that beautiful land
Where the heart smiles on the simple and bland.
Wanting to both of us now is the nest
Feather'd to furnish the wearied with rest.
Who are the wearied if not I and you,
Who after tempests some calm would renew?
Who are more ready to echo the cry
Of the Greek poet in ages gone by,
When of a sudden at Pyrrah's sweet look
Down on the ground he dash'd Hesiod's book—
“Works and Days” named, while exclaiming so
bold,
“Hence with your ‘Works and Days,’ Hesiod
old”?

Foam and the wild spray that beats upon rocks
Are but faint symbols of grim mental shocks.
Take us from all these assemblies for peace,
Where imprecations and wrath never cease.
Take us from all new humanity's schools,
Where one might think it is Satan who rules,
Owning 'tis vengeance that they would fulfil,
Far worse than death, and contrived by their will,
Kindled to frenzy that seems to exceed
What the mere passions of mortals can feed,
Such is the flaming and terrible ire
Lit and transmitted to each like a fire.
Take us from seeing the gloomy parade
Of the things cruel, for which we're not made.
Take us from hearing the vows and the boasts
Yielded by patriots marshalling hosts—
Some to attack, sooth, and some to defend,
Each with an anger that seems without end.
For sooth, to this world were none of us sent
Means of destruction to use or invent.
It was for Peace that we all have been made,
An infinite price for which has been paid.
Yet there is truth in the classical strain
Raised by Erasmus when Peace does complain
That nowhere on earth her presence is found,
She is so driven from every ground.
Vainly you seek her in popular haunts;
The people reject her spite of their vaunts.
Royal, and noble, scholastic, retired,
Priestly, the mitred, monastic attired,

Family, even men's innermost, ways,
Seldom present any scene where she stays.
What can we hope for when each man's own breast
Yields no asylum where Peace can find rest?
No marvel, therefore, if no house you find,
No school or cloister to her ever kind.
Nathless unfurl'd still the standard we see
Of Him who wishes that peaceful we be,—
No warrior, Satrap, but Prince of Peace,
Who from all discord would grant us release,
Who wish'd us so close united to be
As to resemble the Godhead in Three—
Ineffable union, one to be all—
A Peace which your sweet Halcyon Hours fore-
stall.

For know, that of Peace the principal part
Is but to wish for it quite from your heart;
For all occasions then wait on her still,
Hearts to content and their wish to fulfil.

True patriots we (for who does not love
His country on earth, his home up above?),
Let us then speed to the fields of the mind,
Where the enjoyments of both we shall find;
Where are the charters that make us so free,
Safe from the quarrels that elsewhere we see.
For what Menander says we at least own,
That "above all law is goodness alone."
We have heard surely enough now of late,
Of Senators angry, laws and debate.

Surely enough now of men's fierce divisions,
Scouting, contending, with angry decisions;
Justice alone can be never possess'd;
There must be goodness to mix with the rest.
So from the crowd let us hitherward fly;
Mind will behold both, and ever supply.
Senates themselves, as De Retz used to say,
Are but mobs witless, whose part they will play.
And what are parties that fight round the cross
But people whose friends must feel at a loss
Call'd to account for a standard so near,
Round which injustice should all disappear?
But when you sit with yourself quite alone,
'Tis Peace you witness; you hear her soft tone.
Ah, it is then that you cry to the stream
Fed but by floods from some mortal's dark dream!
Why interrupt thus the passage of Thought,
Which but the true and the beautiful sought?
As if drunk with rains thou bearest along
No limpid waves that to Naiads belong.
Thou owest to clouds these waters that rage,
Which our desires can never assuage.
But ere much longer thou near me wilt run,
I shall behold thee dried up by the sun,
Who can distinguish a natural flow
From inundations that hurtful will grow.
For us, as for Greeks, then, the Hours are three—
All, like the Graces, familiar to thee.
Eirene, Eunomia, Dike, third,
All as if sent for the Halcyon Bird.

Halt with me now near the brink of the sea,
Or at the source dear to you and to me,
Shaded by poplars beneath which will burst
The pure limpid wave that quenches our thirst.
On to the Beautiful then be our flight—
On to the innocent, playful, and bright.
Birds of all creatures feel earth's power least;
Halcyons and doves there will wait on our feast,
As symbols of peace or coming to bless;
Since we all know what the latter express,
So that e'en Buffon would write upon love
When he would teach us the ways of the dove.
'Tis halcyon hours we only would seek;
Halcyon days, sooth, are not for the weak.
No birds are now as in fable of yore,
That found life's sea tranquil far from the shore,
Seven days brooding, and seven more days
Feeding the youthful on watery ways,
No storms to ruffle the vast sea's wide breast,
But one constant calm, one perfect, sweet rest.
An hour, some moments, for us will suffice;
Then back to billows we're flown in a trice.
So while this interval precious will last,
Far from us all gloomy thoughts let us cast.
The moist-blowing west wind wafted along
Through soft foam o'er waves of the sea, in song,
Sweet Aphrodite till on the Cyprus shore
The seasons bright-filleted pleased her more.
Give we ourselves like her all to the stream,
We shall reach shores of a bright golden dream.

The Ocean saw Halcyon's victims of love;
We to the groves fly and regions above,
To gardens and fields where Frolic can play;
While the grave formal find nothing to say.
For what is sprightly will silence the herd,
Elsewhere enough of whose lowings are heard.
Fancy and Fable are playmates for me;
And these with Truth we shall find will agree.
Truth to such fortresses let us all fly
Which can a certain assistance supply.
Wisdom, that men will philosophy call,
Yields somewhat special intended for all—
Strongholds, and back-doors, and e'en Belvideres
Quite philosophical, such as one hears
Belong'd once to Charron, falsely accused
Of a religion but mix'd and abused.
But the best Christian may always enjoy
Changes of air that will sick minds annoy;
And faith, too, when strongest mind must expand
Till it admits e'en the tender and bland—
That which the herd of our learned grave fools
Deems quite opposed to their stiff, formal rules,
Where deep Montalembert finds some repose
From the fatuity elsewhere he knows,
That will confound things with ignorant spite,
Thinking itself only is in the right;
While the grave people that make the most noise
Own but the folly that half-truths employs;
Though I think nought more bewilders the mind
Than when dull gravity thus arm'd you find.

Some mode of escape then needs must be tried ;
So to your breast's inward alcove you glide ;
As the old castles that rose up so high
Had their small gardens all secret and shy.

Dance a merry round,
Ev'ry flower sprinkle,
Hearts like bells will sound,
And for moments tinkle.

Fancy, ever wild,
Now must skim and soar ;
Each shall be a child,
Just so—nothing more.

Deep old Fable, wise,
Joins her too with joy ;
Nothing with him vies
Who lets nought annoy.

Once more call back youth ;
Youth, of course, must play ;
But still triumphs Truth
With her peerless sway.

Orpheus could provoke
Trees to bend and dance ;
E'en the gnarled oak
He could so entrance.

Truth, though grave and stern,
Here shall follow suit,
As you will discern,
From her deepest root.

Let Roberti¹ sing,
And De Sales keep measure;
Thither let us wing
All our way with pleasure.

THE CASTLE FABULIST.

A CERTAIN potent Baron bold,
Among retainers manifold,
Kept one whose office, much admired,
Was telling stories when desired.
Our fathers, thoughtful in their day,
Though often wise, were always gay;
And verses we should now disdain
They counted not as wholly vain.
Just ask now any of our files
Whom fashion of the time beguiles,
Would he hear from the Fabliaux
Of ancient days? he'll answer, "No."
To tell an anecdote, or aught
From story-books, is vulgar thought.

¹ "Traité sur les petites Vertus."

Begin; but very soon you'll find
On other themes they set their mind.
And as for listening to rhyme,
For that they now have never time.
If forced to hear, they put on gloom;
Their eyes will amble round the room;
And any fool that's usher'd in
A hearty welcome's sure to win.
The lightest are now pedants sad;
And tales and verse are counted bad.
Wise Solon wish'd to learn by heart,
Before from life he should depart,
Sweet Sappho's verses; but, sooth, they
E'en once to hear them would not stay;
For none to any thing attend
Unless self-interest be its end;
Self-interest, falsely understood,
The sole, supreme, acknowledged good.
Though some are like Parthenius old,
Of whom the ancient poets told;
Whose critical, bold mouth did spill
Upon the Muses his own ill.
Styling the Odyssey sheer dung,
On which the Iliad should be flung.
Chain'd, therefore, like a dog, is he,
And from his collar never free,
Midst Furies on the dreadful shore
Of dark Cocytus evermore.
When I such cutting censors hear,
To frozen pools I think I'm near.

Though nought in water or in air
With their harsh chill I would compare;
Nor snow eternal I'd think old,
Nor Hierapolis e'en cold.

A gourmand mouse, 'tis said, one day,
Whom no grave perils ere could stay,
Who gnaw'd quite reckless on each bait,
And who for food would never wait,
Did cut from great Apollo's lyre
A chord, which proved for him a wire
That kill'd him, seized then by the throat.
The justice of that end we note:
But 'gainst all enemies 'tis so;
His lyre can oft inflict a blow.
The harmony which charms the wise
Strikes the ignoble foe who dies.
And so it is in social haunts,
Where men grow vile for all their vaunts.
"Cornelius," cried the poet old,
"How changed thou art, I now behold.
Our humble and poetic life
Must yield to a far other strife.
Abandon'd to thy thoughts of pride,
Our fables thou wilt all deride.
Our friendship is not to thy taste;
To other views thou now wilt haste.
Well, be it so; and let us yield
Without a contest all the field.

No violence—oh, no ! oh, no !—
It would be useless, as we know.
We are now conquer'd; and 'tis gold
That triumphs, as it did of old."

But this is added to the text,
I felt so fretted and so vex'd.
Return we to the Troubadour,
Though such will be his fate I'm sure.
And Prefaces, forsooth, are wrong,
When all you want is but a song.
Though Pelisson I should surpass,
Varillas too, and Vaugelas,
Johnson and Dryden, many more
So famed for Prefaces of yore,
I ought not longer here to stay,
But now at once commence my lay.
So this parenthesis must end,
And let's rejoin our feudal friend.

It chanced one evening, as he lay
Sleepless in bed, he sent to say
That he much wish'd some tale to hear;
So let his minstrel hasten near.
But then it also chanced the Bard
Found this commission rather hard;
For he was drowsy. But in vain
The master heard him much complain;

When he contrived how to obey,
And yet let Nature have her way.
“Sir,” then he said, “there was a wight
Who had one hundred pennies bright
Of gold, with which he purchased sheep;
Each cost six deniers from his heap.
And with two hundred sheep he went,
To gain his native village bent.
But on his way he found the rain
Had flooded all the road and plain.
The bridge was gone; but there did float
Along the shore a tiny boat,
So tiny that the craft could hold
At once but two sheep of the fold.”

The sly narrator ceased. “Well, well,”
The Baron said, “go on to tell
What did he next, when two had he
Safe on the other side to see?”
“Sir,” said the Bard, “you know how wide
Has late become the river’s tide!
How small the boat! two hundred sheep!
As time is wanting, let us sleep
Until all pass. To-morrow I
With what remains will you supply².

² Found in the “Cento Novelle antiche, Recueil de Fabliaux,” &c.

THE CURATE AND THE MULBERRY-TREE.

HOWE'ER you'd check me and look cold,
There's a quaint tale that shall be told.
So hear you must, howe'er you're bent,
Of Guérin, who to market went—
Guérin, a curate in his day,
And what befell him on the way.
In order to arrive in time,
His mule was saddled ere the chime
Announced the hour when he should pray
According to his holy way.
His Paternosters on the road
He'd say; so off he gaily rode.
Already he was near the town,
When up on high, not dropping down,
The fruit he most prized on a tree
He spied—the dark, ripe mulberry.
The tree with thorns was surrounded;
His hope to eat them seem'd confounded;
The branches too were much too high;
It seem'd he could but feed his eye.
But what cannot a man achieve
Who would his pressing wants relieve?
The curate charged his mule among
The thorns 'midst which the fruit-tree sprung;
And then, upon his saddle standing,
He found the fruit at his commanding;

14 THE CURATE AND THE MULBERRY-TREE.

While with one hand he held a branch
The other served to fill his paunch.
The mule, that faithful friend, stood still,
In strict accordance with his will.
The curate, full of thoughtful glee,
Admired his tranquillity;
When all at once he needs must speak;
'Twere well if he had spoke in Greek.
But now he used the vulgar tongue,
As readiest where dangers sprung.
"In troth," said he, "and any how,
An enemy might catch me now;
It only needs that some one here
Should say 'gee up;' my fall were near."
The mule no sooner heard the cry
Than on she went, left him on high,
Long dangling till he needs must fall
Amidst the wild prickly thorns all.
The mule then to its home went back;
The housekeeper cried out, "Alack!"
The groom to seek the priest was sped,
Who found him on the ground half dead.
"Good master, how did this befall?"
" 'Twas gluttony that caused it all,"
Replied the curate in his way,
The blame upon himself to lay—
"So talk no more, but help me in
Our home, where I may wail my sin³."

³ Beaunois, "Recueil de Fabliaux."

THE NORMAN BACHELOR.

THE year when Turkish Acre fell
 Happen'd the fun I now would tell.
 I always give precise the date,
 Confirming more what I relate.
 A Norman Bachelor one day
 Who for a dinner could not pay,
 To make his crust of bread go down,
 Would seek a wine-shop in the town.
 To the bold landlord then he spoke,
 And never dreamt him to provoke,
 Saying, "For this sous give a glass,
 To make my dry, stale dinner pass."
 The innkeeper, a brutal knave,
 Spilt half the liquor which he gave,
 And, adding insolence to wrong,
 Repeated what is said in song—
 "You will be rich soon, credit me;
 For wine when spilt betokens glee."
 To burst forth in a passion's rage
 Ne'er suits a Norman, always sage.
 Another halfpenny he had;
 "Fetch me some cheese," said he, "my lad;"
 The boor to find it then withdrew;
 The youth unto his hogsheads flew,

Then turn'd a cock and let the wine
Upon the cellar's pavement shine.
The host, returning, wish'd to stop
The flow, though scarce was left a drop;
Then fierce against the youth he turn'd,
Who, stronger, all his fury spurn'd.
So flinging him upon the ground,
Half dead and bruised the host was found;
Who then to justice would complain
Before Count Henry of Champagne.
The cause was heard; and then the youth
Was charged to answer, speaking truth;
Who simply told the story thus,
And added, smiling, with no fuss,
"The plaintiff, who had spilt my wine,
Said that I should in riches shine;
That when such liquor thus was spilt,
It was a gracious act, not guilt;
Although he spilt but half my glass,
He said I should great wealth amass.
Grown liberal through gratitude,
I would not such a debt elude;
So to enrich him more than me
The half a hogshhead I made flee."
The Count liked much the quaint defence,
And found to punish no pretence.
Count Henry laugh'd until the tear
Did falling down each cheek appear;
And then for sentence all he said
Was this—"The cause is quickly sped;

What has been spilt is spilt; rise up,
For now it is the time to sup⁴.
Decisive argument, you know,
At least in ages long ago,
When supper-time would end all jobs
And e'en disperse the fiercest mobs;
For "se désheurer" then was what
The hottest of the crowd would not,
Observes De Retz, whose words I thought
To close the story might be brought.

THE LAND OF COCAGNE.

AN ancient fabulist would tell
Of a strange fact remember'd well.
Although not old, he says that he
For much true wisdom famed might be;
Since beards, however long they grow,
Can no great sense on men bestow.
He tells us not how first he came
To that strange land call'd of Cocagne—
So singularly blest by God,
As those know who its roads have trod.
No tares or cockle there are found,
But all delightful plants abound—

⁴ "Recueil," &c.

The Moly, Asphodel, the Rose,
The Hyacinth, the Violet, grows;
Lotus, Nepenthè shedding balm,
Ambrosian air each breast to calm;
As in those gardens, famed so long,
Of young Adonis known in song.
There tables spread are meant for all;
There all things wait for men who call;
Shops, with no payment ask'd for there,
Invite all those who pass and stare;
There, too, will reign an endless spring;
And there the sweetest voices sing.
The dance is ceaseless, no one tired,
And, what should be still more admired,
No enmities or quarrels rise;
For peace and love are what all prize.
No beauty there will ever fade;
All things to last for aye are made.
The Fountain of Jouvence so famed
Is there, and is but truly named;
For when first symptoms will appear
Of age as if approaching near,
You only have to bathe and cool
Your limbs in that true peerless pool
You plunge in a declining lout,
You're twenty-one when you come out.
He adds, I meant its force to try;
But restless, fidgety, am I;
And I would first be off to tell
Elsewhere how all things there were well.

For where I was I could not stay;
Of old it is my nature's way.
There is no hope, the fit once on,
Of keeping me; I must be gone.
Besides, I said, soon back again,
With you I shall for aye remain.
But oh! alas! and woe is me!
Once past the bounds of that countree,
I never more could find the road
That leadeth back to that abode.
So let this teach ye all like me,
Who ever would the absent see,
To stop where you have found true rest;
For this, once found, is always best ⁵.

THE TWO CITS AND THE PEASANT.

Two cits would go on pilgrimage:
Your pilgrims are not always sage;
And "sage" in ancient language meant
Those who are still on goodness bent.
A peasant join'd them on the road
To visit the same saint's abode.
They join'd e'en their provisions all;
Which as they travell'd proved too small.

⁵ D'Herbelot, Bib. Or. "Recueil de Fabliaux."

They had but one remaining day
To finish their appointed way;
They had wherewith to make one cake,
Which for the morrow they would bake,
Intending—these two cunning cits!
To cheat the poor blunt peasant's wits,
And eat the cake between them two
Whate'er the peasant thought to do.
"Good man," they said, "this cake, you see,
Will do for one, but not for three.
So, to be just, let all three sleep,
And he whose dream is best shall reap
The cake, which he alone shall eat."
Agreed—each lay down on his seat.
The cits, who felt fatigue the most,
Fell fast asleep for all their boast;
The peasant seized the moment sly,
And ate the cake while they did lie;
Then back to bed, he closed his eyes;
The cits woke up and bade him rise.
"Let each now," said they, "tell his dream."
The first cried, "Finest mine will seem;
For lo! methought I saw all Hell;
Like Dante, I could sing it well."
"Tush, tush!" then, smiling, said the other;
"Go tell your stale dream to your mother.
But as for me, I saw the gate
Of Paradise; nor did I wait
To enter, when two angels bright
Invited me to see the sight

Of Heaven's great glory—Gabriel
 And Michael show'd me what I tell."
 Then on he went, sooth, to describe
 The bliss of the celestial tribe.
 The peasant seem'd to sleep till then,
 And suddenly to see the men.
 "Hollo! what's this?" he loudly cried;
 The cits bade him be pacified,
 And tell his dream, as was agreed,
 That soon the prize might be decreed.
 "My dream, oh, yes," he laugh'd and said,
 "When stretch'd upon that hard wood bed
 I saw you both transported far,
 Our pilgrim projects all to mar,
 In hell and high heaven to remain,
 I thought to see you ne'er again;
 So then I rose, and faith and troth,
 Although to own it I am loth,
 I ate myself the cake of bread,
 And then slept soundly on my bed⁶."

THE MISER AND THE ENVIOUS MAN.

"A TRUCE to fables," cries the bard;
 "All false tales I will now discard;

⁶ Found in the "Scelta di Facezie cavate da diversi Autori."

For he that has not true as well
At great men's courts should never dwell;
His histories should mingled be
Like ripe and unripe fruit for thee;
While jumbled all together so,
The bad with good may sily flow."
Hear, then, a tale, one of the best;
'Twill prove a passport for the rest.
Two neighbours were so far agreed
That both came from an evil seed.
The one an avaricious slave,
The other but an envious knave.
Vile Envy makes men hate the world;
But avarice to worse is hurl'd;
For then from this base source will spring
False weights and each usurious thing.
Now these two comrades on a day
Did meet Saint Martin on their way.
No sooner had they caught his eye
Than he did all their vice descry.
No science equals that keen sense
Which holiness can aye dispense.
Mysterious truly is its power
To see the inward sins that lour;
Though to all common mortals nought
Could justify its instant thought.
So clear became to Martin's sight
The motive of each passing wight.
All one for that; with them he'd go;
Though who he was they did not know.

At length, to cross-roads coming then,
His name, well known, he told the men,
And added that, since they must part,
He wish'd a favour to impart,
That for their having met him so
Their pleasure might the greater grow—
Intending all the while to prove
What each within his heart did love.
“Let one of you,” he said, “demand
Some signal favour from my hand.
That instant, know without suspicion
It's granted, but on one condition,
That then the other, who ask'd not,
Should have the double for his lot.”
The greedy knave declined to speak;
The other should the first prize seek,
Of course in order that for him
The double portion fill the brim.
“Speak quickly, dearest friend,” said he,
“I'll leave the glorious prize to thee.
It all depends now on yourself
To gain for life a store of pelf.”
The other long while silence kept—
So long you'd almost think he slept;
'Till, urged by his companion sly,
He ask'd that he might lose an eye.
His prayer was granted on the spot,
And each had his especial lot.
So from the Saint the good both drew,
Without more words, is known to you.

The first with but one eye was left,
The other was of both bereft;
Such is the fruit, you now can trace,
Which bad men gain from Heaven's high grace.

THE PEASANT AND HIS WIFE.

OUR fathers, birds of Halcyon Hours,
Could yet enjoy e'en storms and showers.
They liked to brave a sharp, rough gale,
And veer and tack with shifted sail;
And then, with those they loved the best,
They liked to chaff and have their jest.
Dark contrasts too they did invite
To add fresh lustre to the bright.
Exceptions they would therefore paint
To lovely woman and the saint;
That both those visions might appear
To them more perfect and more dear;
While we exceptions take for rules,
And so become mere vulgar fools.
Then let our Bard now play and sing;
His mirth will leave behind no sting.
His harp may have a rude, rough tone,
But then 'tis strung for smiles alone.

A certain peasant had for wife
The real torment of his life.

It matter'd not what you might say.
You never heard from her but "Nay."
She'd question you in order that
She might then contradict you flat.
Thus painted, now you know her well;
So what chanced later I will tell.
While reaping the corn in his field,
To drought and heat his men did yield;
They ask'd him then to give them wine;
He said, "Alas! it is not mine.
Go ask my wife, and mind you say
That to your prayer I have said nay."
To her they went, and instantly,
When hearing their report so sly,
She gave the drink; when they all laugh'd.
It struck her then that she was chaff'd.
Away she flew in high disdain,
Too full of anger to complain.
But as she pass'd a narrow plank,
She fell, and in the river sank.
The reapers heard her cry aloud;
They rush'd to find her in a crowd;
But as they sought her lower down,
"Seek her above," then roar'd the clown;
"Against the stream she's sure to swim,
According to her constant whim."

⁷ In the "Instructions du Chevalier de la Tour à ses Filles," and elsewhere.

THE YOUTH WITH MANY FRIENDS.

A FRIEND upon the way to join
Is better than a purse of coin.
A Roman, who great fame had won,
Had since some sixteen years a son
Distinguish'd by his happy parts—
In fact, who stole away all hearts.
Gentle and courteous, apt to serve,
From kindness who would never swerve;
To cite the very words is well
Which paint what was a former swell.
Right generous, he had for friends
Such as are his who always spends;
And he, forsooth, could never say
To one who ask'd for money, "Nay."
He'd scatter coin, his gems, cigars;
His means still lasting, nothing jars.
The father grieved his son should be
Renown'd for prodigality.
He told him, those in haste to spend
Would come to ruin in the end.
The son replied, with all respect,
That to have friends he did expect.
He wager'd and he gambled not;
He was no vicious, drunken sot;
He had succeeded in his plan—
More friends possess'd no other man;

While not one enemy had he;
Beloved he was, as all could see.
“What are all riches to a friend?
Nought, and for friendship sake I spend.
Why, sir, I only practise thus
The maxims you instill’d in us.”
“Wisely you speak,” his father said,
“But one reflection pains my head.
What number, think you, have you gain’d
Of friends whose love will be retain’d?”
“I reckon, sir,” he said, “on ten,
All truthful, worthy, faithful men.”
“Ten!” cried his father, “ten! dear son;
You could no greater prize have won.
Alas for me! my sixty years
For more than one are full of fears.
But he is true, I know right well;
Near him distrust can never dwell.
But still do follow my advice,
Just try your ten friends for a trice;
From such an act you can but gain,
Since then you can your trust maintain,
Or else discover, what I fear,
That these are not what they appear.”
The son consented; off he went,
Though sure of them, to prove them bent.
He took with him his future wife,
With whom he hoped to pass his life,
And came as if with stealth to find
A friend who always had been kind,

Who always promised he would be
His aid in worst adversity.
The friend, on seeing him arrive,
Through joy seem'd scarcely to survive.
"I trust," he cried, "at last I may
Render you service in some way;
You know I always did implore
To aid you ever more and more."
"Precisely so," the other said,
"For that end am I hither sped;
This damsel is obliged to fly
A persecutor who is nigh;
I thought with you that she might hide;
For three days let her here abide."
The other, taken by surprise,
Began to hum, and closed his eyes.
"Oh dear! but what would people say?"
To give no scandal was his way.
"Some real service," said he, "ask;
To render it will be my task;
That this would be such I much doubt,
If the whole truth were all found out.
Your own intentions may be just;
But there are cases I don't trust;
So, as for this affair, 'tis clear
That I in such cannot appear."
Then to the second went the pair;
How did he open eyes and stare!
At the first word, which seem'd to fill
His breast with adamant will.

“Heigh-day!” he cried, “indeed, what next?”
Indignant quite he seem’d, and vex’d.
He knit his brows; he mutter’d too;
The frighten’d pair in haste withdrew.
The third, more placid, seem’d to smile,
As if his friend would him beguile;
“My stars!” he said, “what should this be?
I do hate all dark mystery.
All acts of mine are done by rule;
Or else I’d count myself a fool.
A persecutor say you? hum!
A maiden too? well, this is rum.
Some secret history, I wot;
Excuse me, I had rather not.
To mix myself in love affairs
Is what my own pure conscience scares.
Do only show me how I can
Oblige you as a friendly man,
Who in the regular right way
Of business serves you any day;
So serving, I’m a happy wight;
But now I’m call’d away. Good night.”

Discouraged, downcast, went the twain
Unto the fourth, who did complain
That his new house seem’d all of glass;
Its depths are seen by all who pass;
Its many windows are so wide
That scarce a mouse within could hide.

Impossibility did here
Quite physical to him appear.
In short, he question'd all the ten,
And without aid was answer'd then.

The youth, whose soul within him burn'd,
Unto his father then return'd,
Who only gently smiled when he
Admitted that he now could see
The falsehood of these friends profess'd,
Though what they did was not express'd ;
Nor does it matter you should know
Why he would keep his secret so.
“ Well,” said the father, “ now test mine ;
You'll find how truth in him does shine.”
To him the youth now quickly sped ;
He found him even as was said.
No sooner had he heard his want,
Than, putting off all airs of vaunt,
He nodded gently, said the twain
With tears no more their cheeks should stain,
Bade them come in with haste, and he
Their guardian for three days would be ;
Then closing quick the door, he found
Some pretexts artful and yet sound,
With which he could his wife and all
His children elsewhere send—appal
Not one, and then refused to know
More reasons why it should be so.

The youth then laugh'd, explain'd his tale,
And so true friendship did avail.
"Sweet lad," his father said, "when young,
I learn'd this maxim, which was sung,
That a true friend is only he
Who aids us in calamity;
When all men will upon us frown,
And we feel lonely, lowest down,
When all the whole world from us flies,
That is the friendship of the skies^a."

THE LAY OF THE LITTLE BIRD.

THERE lived some hundred years ago
A boor, whose name I do not know—
A peasant, but immensely rich;
Become so, men say, by a witch.
Vast meadows, woods, and rivers fair
He had, and, what was past compare,
A castle, manor, stately, bold,
With turrets more than can be told.
At first this to a knight belong'd,
Then to his son, who vassals wrong'd,
Until by his debauchery
He had the whole to sell and flee.

^a Altered somewhat from Guichardin, "Heures de Récréation," &c.

This peasant bought it then, but how,
Forsooth, I cannot tell you now.
To bring a house to ruin so,
It only needs, as you all know,
A son like him, true prodigal,
Urged on by some deceitful pal.
Yes; towers and castles long enjoy'd
Are quickly by such means destroy'd.
This castle had a dungeon high,
Wash'd by a river that flow'd by;
Within there was a charming field,
Which did each scented flower yield.
The air was so perfumed around,
That dying men were often found
Recall'd to living by the smell;
It is the simple fact I tell.
Amidst the field a fountain rose,
Near which a lofty pine-tree grows,
Which casts its shade upon the grass,
Through which the bubbling waters pass.
But what outshone all wonders there
Was a sweet bird that had her lair
Amidst the branches up on high,
Through which, while cool, you saw the sky.
Both morn and evening she would sing
Her lay of love, and every thing
That could revive sad lovers' hope,
As they lay stretch'd upon the slope.
To hear her sing revived the joy
Of all whom grief did erst annoy;

While to her presence and her song
Was bound the whole that does belong
To this gross, vulgar, stupid boor.
With her alone could still endure
The castle and the meadow bright,
The forest and each gracious sight
Incomparable, which were so
Ordain'd by the great witch, you know.
The bird's song always was but this—
“Let Love divine bestow its kiss.
Knights, maidens, hearken to my lay,
And learn ye always truth to say;
Still profit by my lessons old,
And joy unearthly you'll behold.
Let Love's instructions and advice
Prepare you here for Paradise.”
But when the villain came, she cried,
“Shall goodness here be now defied?
Back, river, to your sources flow;
Tremble, ye towers, deep below;
Ye flowers, close your fragrant lid;
And let all beauty still be hid.
Ah! formerly came here a host
Of those who might their graces boast,
Such gentle knights and damsels fair,
True lovers all, were ever there.
They liked to hear my song, and then
Became they brave and better men,
Or else more faithful and more fond
To love, this poor brief world beyond.

But how the lot of all is changed
Since this vile master hither ranged !
A wretch, whose joy is but to eat,
Who knows and dreams no other feat,
And who would not a penny pay
To hear my wisest, sweetest lay."
Indignant then away she flew.
The peasant thought what he would do.
"If I can catch her once," said he,
"By selling her I rich shall be."
The knave then laid his snares so well,
He had her that same eve to sell ;
For she flew back at evening tide,
On her old branch the night to bide.
"Alas !" she cried, "why is your will
So bent as if my blood you'd spill ?
What harm, sir, have I done you ever,
That me from pleasant life you'd sever ?"
" 'Tis not to kill you," said the knave,
"I'll keep you still to sing your stave."
"And don't I sing both eve and morn ?"
Replied the bird, as quite forlorn.
"Ay, but now henceforth in a cage
You shall indulge your passion's rage,"
Rejoin'd the boor ; "you will be fed
With dainties hanging round your head."
"But how, with freedom lost," said she,
"Can I then sing, no longer free ?"
"If you will play the mute," he said,
"Why then, forsooth, you'll soon be dead ;

You will be free upon the spit,
And then I'll like you more than wit."
" See," said the bird, " I am so small"—
Said he, " One mouthful 's worth it all."
The poor wing'd captive long did try
The cruel boor to mollify;
In fine, she promised, if he would
Restore her freedom in the wood,
That she would teach him secrets three
Which would from evils make him free;
Secrets, too, such as all his race
Had never heard, or thought could trace.
The villain, who for gain did sigh,
Then oped his hand and let her fly.
The topmost branches of the pine
Once gain'd, she dress'd her plumes to shine;
She smooth'd her breast; she stretch'd her wings;
She turn'd her head, but nothing sings.
Then, cited to fulfil her word,
" Most willingly," replied the bird.
" Then list; 'tis an epitome
Of what should guide humanity.
First, BEWARE YOU EVER BELIEVE
TOO LIGHTLY WHAT YOU MAY RECEIVE
WITHIN YOUR EARS, HOWE'ER IT SOUND,
FOR TRUTH NOT ALWAYS SO IS FOUND."
" Is that all you would teach me now,
Deceitful bird of broken vow?"
Replied the boor; " I knew that all!"
Cried birdie, " It you should recall."

Most archly too was all this said ;
She added, " Fix it in your head.
What ! you make faces ! list again,
And of my next you'll not complain.
THYSELF TRY ALWAYS TO CONSOLE
FOR WHAT IS LOST IN PART OR WHOLE."
The boor grew furious in his way,
And cried, " What is the third thing ? Say.
As yet you have but put me off
With what our school children would scoff,
Who know such secrets all by heart ;
So tell the third ere you depart."
" Well," said the bird, " the third thing is
A treasure, and great wealth is his
Who will but practise what you hear ;
Then poverty he need not fear."
The peasant raised two hopeful eyes,
He thought he now might have the prize,
And that the other two were meant
Alone to prove his real bent.
His gift of freedom now would be,
He thought, repaid with usury.
But low, confounded, sank his head,
When this was all that he heard said,
" WHAT'S IN YOUR HAND HOLD, NOR DEEM MEET
THAT YOU SHOULD CAST IT AT YOUR FEET."
" I'll not forget you," cried the knave—
" You, caught again, no art shall save !"
" That trouble I will spare you now,"
Replied the bird, " and look you how"—

With these words far she flew away;
And nought around him then did stay.
The fountain, river, ceased to flow;
The pine, dead, would no longer grow;
The fruit fell, wither'd, on the ground;
The flowers were no longer found;
The spot you thought no force could sever
From beauty, was all gone for ever.
So ends all vulgar, grovelling thought,
When all is gain'd and all is bought.
The joy which floods wise hearts with tears
From vile men flies and disappears;
And wishing to have all below,
They lose all—and 'tis ever so.

THE BOURGEOIS OF ABBEVILLE.


THOSE minstrels who can claim some wit,
And who their seigneurs just would fit,
Should turn to fine romances all
The incidents which them befall.
In a great castle, day by day,
Where come strange folk from every way,
One hears a thousand stories quaint
To please the lightsome and the saint.
Our predecessors found this true,
And great advantage from it drew.

If we would in our turn now please,
We must renounce all selfish ease;
For to give pleasure costs great toil;
Then let us not our office spoil.
Unfortunately, lazy, we
Will seek no pleasing novelty.
Our minstrels think it quite enough
To furnish out some old stale stuff.
But as for me, I now will tell
Of what can be remember'd well—
What happen'd (and be brief I will)
To a rich cit of Abbeville.

From enemies he grief foresaw;
So, not to meet them, he'd withdraw.
His quarrel with a seigneur there
Was quite enough his peace to scare.
So then to Paris he withdrew,
Where life he could begin anew,
Doing then homage to the king,
While commerce did some money bring.
In all the quarter he was loved;
A worthy man he still was proved;
It is so easy thus to be
Esteem'd by all who goodness see!
It needeth but an honest will;
For good old times remain there still.
Now seven years there the bourgeois pass'd,
Who wealth and love had both amass'd;

When lo! his wife fell sick and died—
She who had been his joy and pride.
The father then his son consoled,
Whose grief could hardly be controll'd.
His sorrow, it is said, was great ;
Each item here I must relate.
The father then said to his son,
“ In Paris nought can more be done.
Repair to Ponthieu, whence we came ;
There with my friends raise up our name,
Then wed some damsel sage and fair,
I'll spend my old age with you there.”
The son reflected and obey'd,
So down at Abbeville he stay'd.
Now in the same street lived a knight
Quite poor, but of descent most bright,
Whom usurers so play'd with long,
They gain'd what did to him belong ;
All but his house ; that would not sell—
His wife's—and that was so far well.
This knight an only daughter had ;
The match, you see, would not be bad.
The youth demanded her for wife.
The knight said, “ Pray, how much for life
Have you ? ” The father said, “ I own
Fifteen hundred pounds, all grown
From industry and honest care ;
The half unto my son I'll spare ;
When I am dead, he'll have the rest ;
For such arrangements are the best.”

“ You speak indeed,” replied the knight,
“ Most like an honourable wight.
But promises will never do;
For who can say what may ensue?
Your present purposes are well;
We doubt you not; but yet some spell
On you, I think, may later fall;
And then you would forget them all.
No; but to give my daughter station,
You must now make a clear donation
Of the whole sum that you possess;
My final answer I express.”
The father said, “ This hard condition
May cause me later much contrition.”
But, every day by all assail’d,
Paternal love at last prevail’d.
The deed was drawn, the witness call’d,
And so the father was enthrall’d,
Henceforth a mere dependent grown,
Thus foolishly, unto his own,
So little thinking what should be
Reveal’d to all posterity.
This couple, wedded, had a son
Who, yet a child, had all hearts won.
The old man meanwhile pass’d his days
Not quite contented with the ways
Of the new household, which each year
Still harsher for him did appear.
At first his industry was thought
To have results that might be sought;



But as he grew in age the more,
He came to be esteem'd a bore.
The wife especially, most proud,
Grieved at his being there aloud.
She even said the house she'd quit,
If he should thus remain in it.
So here a contrast comes again,
The use of which I did explain,
For you might live a thousand years,
And no such woman e'er appears.
Ah me ! it is on woman's breast
That old and young can safely rest.
But now let us return and mention
What did exhibit the exception.
In fine, she plagued her husband so,
At last he bade his father go,
And seek at once some other roof,
And thenceforth from them keep aloof.
I'll not detain you with the prayer
Of the poor old man banish'd there.
In vain he ask'd for only straw;
'Twas told him that he must withdraw.
Your heart would melt, your tears would flow,
If all he said you were to know.
For bread and water was his prayer,
And he would trouble no one there;
An old man needs so little food ;
To them, when strong, he had been good.
Besides, he scarcely now could walk ;
They should no longer hear his talk ;

And then, "consider, chicks," he said,
"How very soon I must be dead ;
If with some alms you'd cleanse all sin,
To me give alms and high Heaven win.
Think of my thirty years of care
For you, and these poor white locks spare.
Remember how God loves the man
Who helps his father when he can."
The son seem'd all this well to know ;
But yet for peace old age must go.
The father rose, all bathed in tears ;
Yet still forgiving he appears.
But one last grace he will demand,
Already with his staff in hand.
"The winter," said he, "cometh soon,
Then grant me but this one small boon.
My threadbare garment just behold ;
I've nothing to withstand the cold.
For all the coats to you I gave,
Of yours grant one, my life to save—
The oldest, what you'd no more wear,
Some cast-off thing that you can spare."
The wife replied that there was none ;
He'd better say no more, begone.
He ask'd a rug from off the horse ;
His son, as touch'd by some remorse,
Made signs unto the child to bring
Of what he found the oldest thing.
I told you that the child was good ;
His thoughts can now be understood.

The grace of God, you see, can change
A family, however strange.
From parents good a bad child springs,
From bad, an angel minus wings.
This boy, not older than eight years,
Had striven long to hide his tears.
The stable reach'd, he seized the best
Of all the cloths, flung down the rest,
Cut it in two, and brought one part
To cheer his poor grandfather's heart.
The son, indignant, loudly cries,
"This brat his parents both defies !
You have o'erpass'd my orders strict,
And you of guilt I now convict."
"Excuse me, father," youngling said,
"I knew you wish'd your father dead ;
And so, to further your intention,
I brought the half you did not mention.
Nor have you thereby greatly lost,
However much that warm rug cost ;
For now the other half can be
Reserved for your extremity,
When old, you will be sent to stray,
Like him, half naked, on your way."
This keen reproach, address'd so well,
Upon his father's heart did tell.
Down falling at the old man's feet,
He pour'd out tears, though bitter, sweet.
Paternal pardon he besought,
And back at once his father brought,

Made him the lord of all within,
And cancell'd so his former sin.

Remember well this history,
When children married you would see.
Be wiser than this poor old man,
And keep off ruin while you can.
Your children love you, past all doubt ;
But seek not thus to find them out.
It is the safest, wisest thing,
Yourself into no gulf to fling,
From which you never can escape,
However long and wide you gape.
He who on others will depend,
Some tears before his death will spend⁹.

⁹ "Novelliero Italiano, Doctrinal de Sapience."

The lesson may be needed in the nineteenth century, as the following seems to indicate:—

"Dear Brother,—I've got one of the handsomest farms in the State; crops good, prices never better. We have had a glorious revival of religion in our Church, and both our children (the Lord be praised!) are converted. Father got to be rather an incumbrance; and last week I took him to the poor-house. Your affectionate Brother."—*Morning Star*, New Orleans, April 12, 1868, ap. Rose—"the great country."

MERLIN.

Two woodmen near a forest side
In the same village did abide.
Both poor from birth, they were content,
And knew not what vain wishes meant.
But each with what he did amass
Grew rich enough to buy an ass,
That carried home the wood each day
To the rude hamlet where they lay.
Together, with each rising sun,
They left their homes : when work was done,
Together they their home regain'd ;
And so their lives were both maintain'd.
For twenty years, on such toil bent,
Thus pass'd their lives so innocent.
It chanced one winter's day of snow,
When neither to the woods could go,
That one of these poor men was left
Of money and of bread bereft.
A wife and children too he had ;
A scholar ripe was e'en his lad ;
For he would educate his son
With means his honest labour won.
But now they all were hungry, cold ;
As wind in gusts swept o'er the wold.
Next morning, spite of snow and frost,
Go still he would, whate'er it cost

Him, thus so painfully to toil,
That he might bring them back some spoil.
The other woodman stay'd at home;
The weather was too rough to roam.
Our poor good father found he could
Make nothing of the frozen wood;
His axe fell from his cold, stiff hands.
In tears, and without hope, he stands;
For what would wife and children say,
When nought he brought back that would pay?
His state became thus truly sad;
He tore his hair as one half mad;
He cried; he groan'd with stifled breath;
Despairing, he invoked his death:
When suddenly a voice, quite near,
He heard, though no one did appear,
From midst the bushes, and it said,
"Why weep, and wish thyself now dead?"
"Because," he answer'd, "I hate life,
Abandon'd thus to all its strife."
"And I," the voice replied, "am he
Named Merlin, skill'd in mystery.
I have compassion on your lot;
But let not Christ be thus forgot."
He bade him then go home, and see
How him from indigence he'd free.
"Go dig," he said then, "in a field
Which can a mighty treasure yield,"
Describing well the spot precise
Where he could find it in a trice.

“Now mind,” he added, “that you use
This well, and not my gift abuse.
Assist the poor, and this day year
Be sure in this spot to appear.
I give you now this rendezvous ;
So prove yourself both good and true.”
The woodman pour’d out thanks, and went
Quick homewards, whither he was sent.
His wife, who spied him coming back
Without a faggot, cried, “Alack !”
With ass and hatchet only he
Return’d thus to his family.
“Oh, give us bread !” she cried, “yes, bread,
If you would not behold us dead.”
He, smiling, said then to his wife,
“You are the true charm of my life.
But make not such a hideous noise ;
’Tis LITTLE TIME THAT GOD EMPLOYS¹.”
Then too he told her what had pass’d ;
The treasure sought was soon amass’d.
It seem’d their happiness was sure ;
Their joy complete would now endure.
Right prudent at the first were they ;
They seem’d to keep their wonted way ;
For had this sudden change been known,
Their wealth, perhaps, away had flown.
The man went sometimes to the wood,
That nothing might be understood.

¹ “En petit de tens Diex labeure.”

But, by degrees, he deem'd it best
To give himself unbroken rest.
He purchased land, a house, and then
He yielded not to other men
In all the pleasures he would gain,
For which he every nerve would strain.
Those who would know him not before,
Now said they valued no one more.
A year had pass'd, and that same day
He took unto the woods his way;
To the same spot approaching near,
He call'd on Meriin to appear.
"Speak," cried the voice; "Art thou content?
To make thee happy I am bent."
"Of riches," said he, "I have store;
But one thing I desire more.
Some honours now would suit me well,
For life without them is like hell.
Let me be Provost of the town;
I shall not feel myself a clown."
"You shan't," said Merlin, "long complain
Of wanting this; come back again,
When once another year has pass'd,
And on the same day as this last."
He added exhortations wise,
And said that he should have that prize.
Made Provost thenceforth of the place,
His pride with power grew apace;
And with impunity he thought
That every pleasure might be sought.

As for his ancient friend and true,
Him he declared he never knew.
That comrade of his former lot,
That neighbour dear, was now forgot.
He saw him daily with his ass,
But never stopp'd as he would pass
To toil, as in the days of yore;
Never to him would he speak more.
Another year did then come round ;
He stood again where he was bound ;
And as ambition grew with food,
He'll make his new wants understood.
He wanted that his daughter fair
Should marry Aquileum's Mayor;
And that a Bishop's chair should fill
His son, a simple cleric still,
Though knowing letters, reading well
In any book that schoolmen spell.
Then this, too, was given; only now
In silence granted was his vow.
He then indulged in every whim;
His guilt at last o'erflow'd the brim.
To Merlin in a year he went ;
Insulting him was his intent.
" 'Twas weariness to bear him more,"
He said, " and constantly implore,
As if, forsooth, each year must see
My own inferiority.
I need no patron longer now,
To listen to my ardent vow;

Nor will I keep on calling thus,
Though Merlin choose to make a fuss.”
Sage Merlin then did answer not ;
But our proud Provost changed his lot.
With chains of circumstances bound,
His fortune was no longer found.
Land, house, and children, all were lost ;
Each effort that he made was cross’d ;
Till in the end, quite poor and weak,
His daily bread he had to seek
By fetching wood to each man’s door,
Who then remember’d him no more ².

THE FATHER GUARDIAN.

In Florence, some few years ago,
A fact occur’d which you should know.
For though the incident is small,
’Twill cheer when graver things might pall.
We need at times a merry change,
Not always through deep themes to range.

Recurring to that city fair,
St. Francis had a convent there

² “Recueil de Fabliaux.”

Of friars, who, 'tis said, were then
Most holy, hospitable men.
The Guardian, above all, appear'd
To be to every one endear'd.
Most wise, yet liking jollity,
And learned without pedantry;
Serving some poor folk every day
Was their right cheerful, constant way.
But as they pleased in conversation,
Some guests would come of every station;
Some who precisely did not know
Now whither they should that day go;
Young nobles nowhere else did find
A welcome truer or more kind;
While others, who loved graver talk,
Would drop in daily from their walk.
And then, to this to add a zest,
The dinner-hour aye pleased them best.
"Excitements elsewhere can't be had;
To see the friars won't be bad.
Besides, we shall meet company,
And, who knows? something quite new see."
So that the Guardian found at last
Without some guests that no day pass'd;
But since the convent too was poor,
He knew that this could not endure
Without an inconvenience grave,
From which he must the friars save.
Resolving all this in his mind,
He thought some remedy he'd find;

So thenceforth he resolved no more
Should come such numbers to his door
Of men who after all, he thought,
Not merely mental food there sought.
Then to the Cellarer he said,
“ These constant guests I truly dread.
From this day forth, now mark me well,
When any come, go, toll the bell ;
Then to the church I'll show the way,
And press them for our prayers to stay,
To meditate with us awhile,
And half an hour so beguile.
Soon after that, some coffee bring,
Or else some other costless thing ;
For courteous we should be to all,
To great folk even as to small.”
The quaint device that very day
Was tried, and only few would stay,
Who must appear to meditate,
Whatever was their inward state.
The friars knelt, and stoop'd their head,
While all around was silence dead.
The guests look'd wildly at each other ;
They had not even thoughts to smother,
Unless that (and this scared them most)
They had not reckon'd on their host.
The news soon spread of their reception
As being stupid past conception.
Their numbers dropp'd off one by one,
Until at length they all were gone.

The Porter had an easy task,
For guests to enter ceased to ask.

Just opposite the convent door
A barber lived from days of yore.
You know the race delights to prate,
To ask and tell of every state.
Shaving the Guardian's head one day,
He must indulge his wonted way.
So, "Father," said he, "how is this?
Your daily troops of guests I miss.
Sooth, formerly I always saw
What flocks your dinner-hour did draw;
But now, methinks, you're left alone;
Your gate is quite deserted grown."
"Ah! Barber, honest friend and dear,"
The Guardian answer'd, "would'st thou hear
The reason they no longer flow
To our poor door as you did know?
This kind of devils, credit me,
Only thus driven off can be
By the plain way the Gospel tells,
Which the whole tribe right soon expels.
So, when their visits prove offence,
With prayer and fasting chase them hence."

THE OLD WILL AND THE NEW.

Now who is present? who comes near?
Let all vain scoffers disappear.
The formula you know is old,
As when the mysteries were told.
But now, although 'tis fun we tell,
The same commencement suits us well.
Let all such impious men depart;
Their sneers would chill a merry heart;
Though let them know I heard this tale
From those 'gainst whom they always rail,
Who bear a jest far more than they,
And will enjoy it as they may,
Even when made upon themselves,
Which only proves them witty elves,
Yes, spiritual doubly then,
As the French designate such men;
Unlike their enemies, who dread
When aught of them is smiling said.
But let these tremblers speed away;
'Tis not for them what I shall say;
Their comment would be but complaints
Of those whom we revere as saints.

But this preamble is too long,
List now with cheerfulness my song.


The scene, I think, at Tournay lay;
But at this doubt we need not stay.
It matters little to the tale,
Which to yield laughter will avail.

An aged lady lived alone,
Having lost long ago her own.
Most rich she was and charitable,
So to aid many she was able.
But most of all she did befriend
Those who for God their strength would spend.
Poor pious people at her door
Might reckon on her willing store.
But she would help no idle lout;
For worthy objects she found out,
Who to her gate need never stray,
For she knew well where merit lay.
Some friar Carmelites had there
A convent—those true men of prayer
Who claim Elias, as you know,
For their first founder long ago.
Her views in brief might all be said;
She did revere the hooded head;
And well she might, for truly they
Still tread the narrow, holy way;
And ages that would cry it down,
Suit best a gross, unletter'd clown.

This lady had not, as I said,
A relative; for all were dead.

So in the will that now she writes
She leaves all to the Carmelites ;
And since no others had a claim,
Methinks there is small ground for blame ;
For to endow the holy thus
Proves useful to each one of us ;
Since all that they possess seems free
To strangers just like you and me.
Their churches open ever stand ;
Their books are at all men's command ;
With painting if you'd feed your eyes,
There still for you each picture lies.
What's more, if you should want a friend,
Enter ; on you a heart will tend.

But now it chanced that in that town
Some Jesuits did settle down.
Their schools became most justly famed ;
You know their worth when they are named.
For you, I hope, will more agree
With great Lord Bacon's judgment free
Respecting these, than with the rout
Who 'gainst the Jesuits will shout ;
In them wise sanctity you find,
If I do truly read your mind.
In fact, what more accords with truth
Than soundly educating youth ?
And in this college it was found
That Christian graces did abound ;



While in all sciences as well
That they were first the town did tell ;
Just as in Paris they've the trick
To beat the school Polytechnique.
Now, all this floating in the mind
Of our aged lady, ever kind,
So anxious always to fulfil
Her duties best, she changed her will,
And instituted as her heir
The Jesuits establish'd there.
She thought she served the public well
When she did this ; and then she'd tell
The good Superior who had wrought
Such changes in her private thought,
By causing all that town to be
A type of Christianity.
The Carmelites meanwhile knew not
The changes in their future lot :
Though, had they known them, rest assured
Their charity would have endured.
For, sooth, their thoughts are not like those
Who aye declare themselves their foes.

It chanced one day their Prior came
To visit that respected dame ;
And while with her, who should come too
But the Jesuit, whom he knew.
In spite of all our mirth and fun,
No ill by any there was done.

In these true, just men, righteous, dear,
No jealousy did e'er appear,
Unless, perhaps, the old pretension
Of giving Carmelites extension
Backward to old prophetic days
Did rankle somewhat: newer ways
Not seeming quite so venerable
As those of friars who were able
To trace their early parentage
E'en from the very Bible's page.
The two meek fathers some time sat,
While all the three did kindly chat;
Till both together rose to go;
Though each to be the first was slow.
With deep, unfeign'd humility,
Both would still yield precedence;
Until at last the Jesuit
Conceived a stratagem most fit
To end the strife, and, as was best,
To end it with a courteous jest.
"Pass first, good father Carmelite,"
Said he, "precedence is your right.
Of the Old Testament are you;
While I am only of the New."
'Twas thought a compliment, no more;
So both pass'd from the lady's door.
But when she came to die, I wot,
The compliment was not forgot:
For from her testament he knew
How he, sooth, was not of the new.

With laughter then he told it all ;
And each one laugh'd within that hall.
For men so innocent and gay
Meet thus whate'er occurs each day.
No circumstance for them is grave,
If only mankind they can save.
But still, to silence all complaint,
This tale was told me by a saint—
A Jesuit himself—who smiled,
The last who men would have beguiled.

THE WAYS OF PROVIDENCE.

THEY say there lived in ancient days
A hermit shunning common ways,
Who, though he did alone remain,
Of others' fortunes would complain.
Beneath his distant green-wood tree
He thought of men like you and me,
And wonder'd much at sundry things
That each day's observation brings:
That I should still be gay as air,
While you are steep'd in sorrow there.
'Tis said it was a dark temptation,
He look'd on life with detestation—
From marking that best men had not
For goodness a befitting lot ;

Whereas the wicked seem'd to be
The first to reap felicity.
And then, as poets did complain,
No order seems in life to reign.
Thebes at a lyre's sweet sound began,
And at a flute's to ruin ran.
Built and demolish'd by the sound
Of music was that city found.
Now deaf and laid low are the stones
Which once heard and obey'd its tones.
The lyre's seven chords sufficed to raise
The seven gates which yielded praise
To the sweet Muses, as they tell ;
And at a melody they fell.
Yet flutes and lyres are known to be
Both instruments of harmony.
Then Love and Wisdom seem to yield
For ruin thus alike a field.
Love of Hippolytus thus slew
Phædra, as all the ancients knew ;
Whereas Hippolytus was slain
By temperance, which proved in vain.
The theme, you see, no mind should spurn ;
But to our hermit let's return.

They say an Angel then was sent,
Who as a young man with him went,
Inviting him to wander so,
That he might sooner come to know

The facts, of which he would be sure,
And their true causes so obscure.
The first night, it is said, they came
To a good host of noble fame,
Who gave them a reception such,
They could not praise it overmuch.
Then forward for a second day
They left his house at the first ray;
But, while he silence did enjoin,
Their host's prized goblet to purloin
Was what this strange young man was seen
To do on leaving; which, I ween,
Made doubt the hermit that his friend
Was not what he did first pretend.
"Sooth," said he, with a knowing nod,
"I think he scarcely is from God;
Though he did speak at first so well,
Of him I know not what to tell."
The next night with a miser they,
A churlish, greedy villain, lay,
Who gave them niggardly vile food,
Yet seem'd to think it far too good.
To him our youth the goblet gave,
Which made the hermit wildly rave,
And feel suspicions still more strong
That somewhat must be wholly wrong.
The third day, as they further rode,
They came to a good knight's abode,
Who treated them so like the first,
With thanks the hermit seem'd to burst.

This knight would e'en, at peep of day,
Send one to guide them on their way,
Which for a mile or two, he said,
Through wilds intricate, pathless, led.
But while with him the hermit talk'd,
And with the young man careless walk'd,
On coming to a river's brink,
He saw the guide fall in and sink;
His comrade, adding sin to sin,
Had simply, slyly, push'd him in.
The hermit's aid was wholly vain;
So there he only could complain.
He call'd on fir-trees, streams, and rocks;
But Nature such cries only mocks.
The fourth night even proved more sad;
For with a noble host they had
Their lodging, which did all excel,
So perfect was each thing and well;
Excepting that a child did cry
Loudly within, and sleep deny
The guests, however weary so;
'Twas their host's son, as they did know.
The stranger rose, and softly stepp'd
To where the infant's bed was kept,
Then strangled it, and left it dead;
Before daylight they both were sped.
The hermit, trembling, fear'd to stay;
So still they plodded on their way—
The hermit, as one wholly lost
In thoughts—his mind quite tempest-toss'd.

But ere the glorious sun did rise,
The youth did stop the hermit's cries,
By a strange, bright transfiguration,
Which proved his own celestial station;
And then unto the hermit he
Explain'd the wondrous prodigy.
"From Heaven," he said, "I come to you,
That henceforth you may ever view
God's hidden judgments and obscure
As points on which you may be sure
That justice and that goodness great
On human circumstances wait.
For first, I took the precious cup
From the good man where we did sup,
Because on plate his heart was set,
While heavenly things he did forget;
And I did give it to the boor
Who gave such entertainment poor,
That thenceforth he might come to be
Less ill-disposed for charity.
Besides, you should be brought to know
That bad men prosper here below.
What would you? 'Tis a mystery;
You nothing yet can fully see.
Perchance it is to Paradise
To pass them there is no device.
Then, if to death I sent the knave,
It was his master's life to save,
And him too from a greater ill,
For that same night I knew he'd kill

His master, who to us was kind ;
The secret reason thus you find
Why I did slyly push him in,
To save him from committing sin.
Our fourth host, while he had no child,
Was charitable, just, and mild.
But since the birth of this poor babe,
For it he'd every penny save.
The poor were driven from his door;
For no good deed need you implore
Him, who now only wish'd to see
A great and rich posterity.
The babe, as yet so innocent,
To instant bliss was this way sent.
The father would thenceforth employ
His means to gain a lasting joy."
And when the hermit heard it all,
His late rash thoughts did him appal.
Deliver'd from this fell temptation,
He felt thenceforth but admiration
For God's own secret judgments dread,
Which are so deep, the prophet said.

Sooth, poets far more skill'd than I
Have told this legend of the sky.
But Guy de Roye³, that prelate sage,
Relates it on a graver page;

³ " Le Doctrinal de Sapience."

And so, methought, you'd like as well
To hear him the same story tell.
For here his very words you read,
Of which we still have constant need.

M. D'ALIGRE.

SWEET good temper, what can be
Aye as happy, blithe, and free,
As the mind that thou dost rule
In thy way so quiet, cool?
Dewdrops on the rose-leaf near
Are not half so bright and clear.
Lakes spread wide in purple calm,
Soothe no bosoms like thy balm.
Slopes and spring-tide groves so green
Yield nought equal to thy sheen.
Fragrant air at peep of day
Ne'er refreshes like thy sway.
Golden sunsets cannot be
Redolent of bliss like thee.
Solemn silence o'er the snow,
Regions where the glaciers show,
Have no voice to equal thine,
Mystic where thy peace will shine,
Far above us in the sky,
Whither point thy thoughts so high.

Great D'Aligre (scan the lore),
Father of the Chancellor,
With this temper was endow'd,
Never quarrelsome or proud.
Feeling indisposed, they say,
Doctors took a subtle way
To restore his former health;
All was to be done by stealth;
For they said that humours deep
In his frame did lately sleep,
Which to chase defied their art;
That must be the patient's part.
Let his anger once be woke;
Him some person should provoke.
Then he will recover soon;
So offence will prove a boon.
Thus instructed all were now;
Each to anger him did vow.
Valets brought his shirt in holes,
Burnt so by the falling coals.
Quietly he only said,
"Bring another to my bed."
Then they let his porcelain fall;
Nought he said but "Is that all?
Breakages are good for trade;"
Angry, yet he was not made.
"Feasts," he said, "were never gay
Where no broken fragments lay"—
Comment, which I heard from one
Now, alas, long dead and gone;

Forbin Janson, Bishop, he,
Of the old and fair Nancy,
Saint and still the grand seigneur
Whose sweet smile could manners cure.

That my story may be short,
To all schemes they did resort ;
But it still was quite in vain ;
Never did he fret, complain.
“ What,” said they, “ is left to try
To allay his malady ?
Only tell us how we can ”—
A grim lawyer was the man,
Who before him had to plead ;
He supplied what they did need.
A gesticulating elf,
Orator he thought himself.
He his two arms threw about,
While he argued and did shout ;
At each gesture did his gown
Rustle as he let it down.
Sounds of the stiff silk were such
They at length did prove too much
Even for this patience tried ;
In loud anger then he cried,
“ Silence, sir, your robe ; pray do,
If, forsooth, I must hear you ! ”
So, his wrath thus kindled fast,
D'Aligre was cured at last.

OLD JEWELLERY.

ALL trades should thrive; so here I dwell,
 Some ancient gems to show and sell—
 Gems quite ethereal, mental, found
 In mines where lustrous gleams abound;
 For in all prose, when grandly made,
 There's somewhat of the goldsmith's trade.
 At least, when setting facts in prose,
 Or verses too, as each one knows,
 A jeweller must be employ'd;
 Whose work is never more enjoy'd
 Than when he circles thought with gold,
 Or resets gems whose frame is old.
 Mine is a dark, grim, dusty shop,
 Though at the window people stop,
 Attracted by some time-worn thing
 Of which I now propose to sing.
 So pray step in a moment here;
 For what is there to cause you fear?
 If now you will not use my ware,
 With me a minute you can spare,
 While I unlock my drawers and show
 The things I value in a row;
 At least a little chat may be
 Quite pleasant to a man so free,
 Who cannot, sooth, I must suppose,
 Imagine that he all things knows.

Well, here right quaint old gems you see
That glow with great intensity.
But what is singular in each
Is, that it too can something teach.
The common diamond does but shine;
The light in these is quite divine;
And in these you will soon perceive
Some tints, some gleams that time will leave—
Some semblance of another age,
As if you read a printed page.
As the Egyptian wizards show
Within a drop what you would know;
So in each gem within my hand
Some fine old grace you'll understand.

In works of art, a connoisseur
Finds traces manifold and sure,
By which he can distinguish well
The age of each, and clearly tell.
Some speck, some tint, some filigree,
Enables him at once to see
Sooth whether it be new or old,
Quite true, or made but to be sold,
Pass'd off as genuine, although
A judge its worthlessness can know.
In thoughts and in all social ways
Some indication likewise stays,
By marking which we can discern
Their date, and when they sway'd men learn.


For sentiments appear to change
With circumstances in their range.
They are not always quite the same;
They vary even with their name,
Some great vicissitudes attest
That this will happen with the best.
They have their history, forsooth,
As marking their decay and youth.
Some will long triumph, and then fall
Away, whole nations to appal.
Eternal in their source or root,
All ages some seem not to suit;
Not equally respected then,
Their weakness oft e'en alarms men.
Just like these jewels I display,
You think that they have had their day.
But still the precious gem is there,
Which to disdain should no one dare.
Take off the setting if you will,
But the old jewel glistens still.
These antique things that here we see
May all be made to please e'en thee;
If thou wilt only change the frame
Which superficial people blame.
Then set each freshly, and you'll find
That all will prize it but the blind.

At first, perhaps, you'll think me wrong
For thinking these are worth a song.

But all the same you soon will see
The beauty that attracted me.
No jewels can come near the sheen
Of certain ancient traits when seen
In action, though a change of style
Has crept o'er all of these the while.
If antiquarians prize the gold
As fashion'd by the skill'd of old,
Much more the mental gems should be
Esteem'd by men of judgment free,
Howe'er ideas and manners change,
When through successive times they range
In study, marking well each page
Which shows us a long bygone age.

I know an estimation just
Of all is what we best can trust.
For 'tis not all old things we find
That can content a truthful mind.
Some ancient things are, sooth, so bad,
The thought of them can make us sad—
Such as the torture, superstitions,
Much state-craft, and its inquisitions.
Some feudal privileges—such
As we cannot detest too much—
Oft vestiges of pagan life
With which the Church would be at strife.
All these are things I never show;
They only shine in hell below.

Whereas, past doubt, some items new
Present a progress to the view—
A progress that is not a dream,
Though to some hard hearts it does seem.
You must not, therefore, think that I
Would such plain facts as these deny.
My neighbour who outsells me there
I much esteem, I do declare.
If worth of ancient styles I tell,
Some present fashions please me well.
But then, I am not of the flock
That things revived are sure to mock,
Anachronisms calling those
That their desires may oppose.
For, sooth, what they themselves suggest
Is quite as old as all the rest.
No novelty is their distrust
When write as pagans now they must.
When wholly obsolete, they say,
“Must be” a council in our day,
Against which they direct fresh ire,
As if they wanted some new fire.
But why should they call back to life
What had been deem’d a bygone strife?
A school of disrespect to found,
Can lead to no opinions sound;
And mockery need not be taught,
Indigenous in human thought.
To open wide the gates of scorn
Does good to none of woman born.



The thought from which contempt now springs
Is one the oldest of old things.
At Trent, at Constance, or at Nice,
With these wits some were of a piece.
Yea, Paul and Peter met with men
Who thought like these wiseacres then.
So all the boasters of our age
Are oft mistaken, though so sage,
When they will marshal in their files
What they deem error that beguiles.
When they think new each old endeavour,
And old what is as new as ever.
But nought of this is my affair,
Although suggested by my ware,
Since those who handle it are bold
To speak of all things that are old.
I grant that some good things are new;
And progress all our fathers knew.
But surely that's no reason why
We should old graces e'er deny.
Know rather underneath this dust
Lie real treasures we can trust.
Things that excel past all our thought
Amidst these piles may still be sought.
We make them too new fashions wear
By setting them afresh; but there
Is still the gem inestimable,
To every judge appreciable.
In turning over pages old
These moral gems we soon behold;

And 'tis of them I now would sing,
Just as I light upon each thing
That pleases, and must please all still,
If they possess an honest will.
'Tis chance that will direct my lyre
As I find lustre to admire
Amidst these heaps that I possess
In piles far more than I express.
So mark some while I shall display
These riches of a former day—
The most unlike what now we see
Spread out as moral finery.
For it is contrasts chiefly here
That I should wish to show you near.
My song may tempt you to pursue
A study that will bring to view
Fresh beauties to attract you on
For ever, till your days are gone.
For endless you will find the store
Of what was good in times of yore,
In form and colour most unlike
What now is seen, all eyes to strike;
If only you will fancy here
In what light now they would appear.

But still methinks I hear it said,
“Oh! leave these dead things with the dead.
Why thus invite us now to see
Your piles of ancient trumpery?”

Old-fashion'd, quaint, and bygone things,
Of which no living poet sings.

As, when at Dresden you have climb'd the stairs
To where some wrinkled merchant keeps his
wares

Of queer, crack'd porcelain; or, as on your way
By shops of old books on th' Augustine's Quai,
You look with wonder on the dusty floor,
Where strew'd are things you think can please no
more,

So do you haste in mind to pass along,
And heed but little now my proffer'd song,
Esteeming, when invited here to stay,
Myself a relic of another day;
Shrivell'd and wither'd as by Rembrandt's touch—
Some Jew, perhaps; you deem me even such.

Permit me, though right humbly, to reply,
Your thoughts at strife with mine I can descry.

I own the text which does these gems explain
Will often cause the hasty to complain.
The writing, like my own, is often bad
Enough to drive the greatest patience mad.
Each letter oft our scrutiny defies;
They seem not letters, but the legs of flies.
Would you my jewel's nobleness have told?
As, when the wily Florentine of old
Was ask'd to prove his genealogy,
Before French judges of nobility,

When he, so crafty, did before them bring
Six loads, on mules, of parchment for the king,
All borrow'd—titles, *pancartes*, and the rest—
Which might his great antiquity attest.
The judges at the sight did stand aghast,
To view these mould'ring relics of the past.
Confounded were they, seeing them within;
They knew not at what end they should begin.
They told the king, for all the whole world's
gold

They would not the tenth part of them behold.
They said that, in "the Chamber of Accounts,"
Six years would not suffice to sum th' amounts;
That they would lose their eyes, their health, their
brain;

And even then the labour would be vain.
They'd let them pass as Masterships of Arts,
Which thus the school with speed and ease im-
parts

In the old street of Foin, where doctors grant
Degrees, for which some foolish scholars pant,
Just for a cup of doctoral good wine,
Which causes brass as solid gold to shine;
While three times they would say of each aloud,
"Vivat et Bibat," to the gaping crowd.
No; these my wares are of intrinsic worth,
And not design'd, indeed, to cause you mirth.
Besides, my jewels for themselves can speak,
Without your minding scrawls in French or
Greek.

Will you come in? sit down? a moment stay?
 You smile; and would at once resume your way.
 Well, pass, if so you will; but I could show
 Some things that it were fitting you should know.
 You'll stop an instant? See, then, what I bring
 Are gems more precious than oft deck a king—
 Just now more rare than diamonds, opals pale,
 Or emeralds that shame the verdant dale,
 Turquoise, bright ruby, chrysolite, or pearls;
 And say the same, you'll find, will e'en the girls.

Now, first, I deem it not a sin
 If with a pagan I begin.
 But tremble not, as if I meant
 To sing of all with this intent.
 You will yourself recount, admire,
 Much that will sound not on my lyre.

A Roman soldier, dragg'd to law,
 Himself without assistance saw;
 He pray'd Augustus then to be
 A friend in his extremity.
 The Emperor a courtier said
 Before the judges should be sped
 To plead his cause, and see that right
 Should there be done in all men's sight.
 The soldier frankly then replied,
 "Not so I acted at your side

When at great Actium you fought,
And to defend you there I sought.”
While speaking so, he stripp’d his side,
And show’d a wound most ghastly, wide.
Augustus rose, and went himself
To plead for the abandon’d elf.
Now take this jewel up, and see
How it would brightly shine on thee.
View all its sides and think of each,
And you will find it much can teach.

Then goodness lurking in the rudest mind
In the Greek votive offerings you find.
Let’s pause a moment here, my friend, and seek
Some moral sculpture, genuine antique.
Thus gratitude to Power unknown is here,
And that, though misdirected, will be clear :
The offering, ’tis true, astray is sent,
But no one doubts for whom the whole is meant.
Thus Phylodemus, quite worn out with age,
No longer able to transcribe a page,
His lead, his rule, his ink, his knife, his pen,
Which so oft copied lines of thought for men,
Does consecrate—to whom I don’t inquire—
The gratitude alone we should admire.
Then Paris, fisherman, a lobster takes,
And of its shell a grateful offering makes,
That the crustaceous envelope may be
A sign of gratitude for all to see.

Lucillius, saved from shipwreck, gives his hair,
The sole thing left him then to offer there.
Aged Lacon offers joyfully her crutch,
Most grateful for her cure by the mere touch
Of the nymph's fervid source on Etna's flanks,
From which she walks without it, giving thanks.
Menecratis gives slippers ; and a veil
Is offer'd by Phémoneé the frail,
Praxo, the third, a cup has here laid down,
Once all, alas ! familiar to the town.
Now each transform'd, and made a happy wife,
Is grateful, having fled from woe and strife.
Eurydice, devoted to the Muse,
To give a crown with noble thoughts did choose.
A mother of young children, her intent
Was that to learning they should all be bent ;
And so she would instruct herself the first,
That they through her might later quench their
thirst.
Then Gallus offers joyfully his hair,
Most grateful for escape from what did scare.
For, meeting once a lion in the wood,
Awaiting death he quite distracted stood,
Till Heaven inspired the thought his drum to
sound,
When the wild beast, alarmèd, fled the ground.
Sosandre, as what may his calling suit,
Thus offers of his hunting the first fruit.
You see it near the grotto, hung on high,
Where limpid streams reflect the azure sky;

Where rocks are crown'd with pines along the
way,
Where only hunters, like himself, would stray.
Eudemus, able now to pay his debts,
Economy, which saved him, ne'er forgets.
His saltcellar denotes the frugal life
Which rescued him from creditors and strife.


Then vows and noble wishes we have here
Which thus in other offerings appear.
For Lucon on Apollo will bestow,
As the soft down above his lip will grow,
The firstfruits of his consecrated hair,
Offer'd right joyous with an earnest prayer
That all the wisdom of a head of snow
He, while his locks are darkest brown, may know;
That so, when white, his beard and hairs are all
Again cut off, they at his feet may fall.
Archestrates shields offers, with a cry
That he to sounds of choirs and hymns may die,
Growing not old amidst the din of arms,
Where Mars inflicts his direful, odious harms.
Eudoxus likewise gives his youthful hair,
Gladly cut off thus for the first time there,
Imploring only that for recompence
His brow's best ornament may be high sense,
The ivy of Acharnes round his head,
Increasing ever; thus his vow is said.

The "Anthologia" yields another tone,
At which the Muse will not rejoice alone.
A student of the thermal waters old
Which in Bithynia he did long behold,
After a long, detail'd, minute description,
Ends with this grave and piercing admonition,—

"The Master of the world," he says, "directs
All beings to observe the strange effects
Of nature, which He first created thus
To yield a constant lesson unto us,
Impelling all who see to admiration,
And onwards thenceforth to deep adoration.
He is a Spirit that no man can know
Quite perfectly while living here below—
A Being no one here can e'er explain—
A Wonder that a wonder must remain—
A Breath of subtilty that can create
All that we see around this mortal state,
By His just Providence conducting all—
The vast, the distant, as the near and small.
I speak of what I've seen, and heard, and read,
That brought conviction not unmix'd with dread.
I know that when such marvels you descry,
In thought you'll seek to soar beyond the sky;
That wishing, you will seek, and seeking, find
The God Who made and rules the human mind;
Beholding Him in all that here you see,
With Whom you'll share in true felicity."

But now from Classic gems let's turn our eyes;
The Mediæval jewels we should prize
Far more, and wear them too, however old,
Their value being more than can be told.
So here in vast profusion are they spread,
To suit the Christian heart, not less the head.
The noble breast which Honour cannot blame,
That vaunts a high hereditary name.

The first of these seems rather strange,
If it with newest things you range.
'Tis well with trifles to begin,
Though even these have much within.
Two Cardinals will figure now;
Attend, and you will soon learn how.
To supper he of Este did call
Within his noble, princely hall
Him who of Medici was named—
A race for much, sooth, justly famed.
From table risen, to beguile
The time, they'd play at cards a while.
The play of Prime was quickly done;
It was the guest, be sure, who won.
His host did play so as to seem
Of quite some other thing to dream.
"Why," ask'd a gentleman then near,
"Did you so thoughtless late appear?
You must have wish'd, I think, to lose—
A curious part for one to choose;



For, sooth, the game was yours, if you
 Had play'd the card you so well knew."
 "Right," said the Cardinal, "'twas so;
 But then, pray for the future know,
 I ask not guests to eat that they
 Should for their supper have to pay."
 Such answers now would sound as quaint,
 Becoming some eccentric saint.
 Compare them with the latest style,
 And false gems will not you beguile,
 Even although the payment be
 Extorted all for "charity."
 You see at once the lustre true
 Of noble ways, unlike the new.

Then next hear maxims old, approved,
 The farthest from our ways removed..

"Son," then, says an ancient page,
 "Let me teach thy youthful age
 What will make our life to be
 Fraught with true felicity.
 No dull cares or legal bout,
 A Fire that is never out,
 Just sufficient without pain,
 No wish ever to complain,
 Trust in Providence when all
 Worst misfortunes you befall,

Simple ways, an air of ease,
Equals that can daily please,
Prudence, but without finesse,
Nought uncommon in your dress,
Cheerfulness, an humble tone;
As for quarrels, knowing none;
Little meat and ordinary,
Though with seasons it may vary;
A good-humour'd wife, who, gay,
Makes our life a summer's day;
Civil ways and complaisance,
No ambition to advance;
Speaking truth, for a good heart
Falsehood never can impart;
Lofty thoughts, though lightsome, deep;
Each night short but tranquil sleep;
Night and day to feel content,
Innocence your sole intent;
Industry with labour fair,
Cheerfulness your constant air;
Piety, the old and free,
Which makes faith breathe charity;
Hope, too, never once perplex'd,
Nor with any trouble vex'd;
Death regarding as a port
To which all have to resort,
Neither wishing for its hour,
Nor yet alarm'd at its power"—
This is what our fathers thought
When a happy life they sought.

Ha, ha ! what say you now, my scornful friend ?
Are you prepared on gems your wealth to spend ?
'Tis these that would make maidens far more fair
Than if with precious stones they deck'd their
hair.

For, look you now, and hear the simple truth,
'Tis these alone that are becoming youth.
True beauty springs from goodness, said of old
Menander, not from creams and washes cold.
If sense of beauty e'er be keen and strong,
The rest on human loveliness seems wrong,
Misplaced, a blemish, barbarism pure,
Which Nature's quick, deep glance cannot endure.
All costly trinkets near a graceful limb,
Denote a senseless and mistaken whim ;
Though slight cheap things for fancy you may
wear

On neck or ears, on wrists, or breast, or hair ;
Just as perfumes, unless in stately hours,
Are no good substitutes for simple flowers,
In which our nature revels, gracious grown,
That deems no fragrance equal to her own.
But goodness, honour, if they you pervade,
Will ne'er disgust, or pall, or spoil, or fade,
Or can be lost, or pilfer'd, or consumed,
Or in a broken heart be left entomb'd.
Examine then these jewels very near,
And priceless, peerless, will they soon appear.
Just weigh them deftly in your mental scales,
And you will find where real worth prevails.

Yes, imitate, detesting what is sham,
The jewellers so famed of Amsterdam,
Who have their scales made always so exact,
And weigh in yours each thought, each word, each
fact;
And then the special value most precise
Of these you're sure to find out in a trice.

But how I ramble on and vainly talk !
'Twere better that you should resume your walk ;
For what's the good of all such things ? Pray
tell.

You can't indeed make money of them well.
Crowds daily come to search, ask, curious grown,
But, sooth, not one to make the gems his own.
No son of mine, if wise, should ever seek
To keep a shop like this a single week.
No, truly, say I, this will nought avail ;
Be his the things for which there's constant sale ;
Let him not think of showing what is grand,
But that for which there is a brisk demand.
Acquiring taste for Art is a mistake ;
I'd rather teach him how to brew and bake,
That money so might come in every day ;
But as for things like these, they never pay.

Then next, of course, will seem still more fan-
tastic—
The old, dark gems we call ecclesiastic.

But here are two for your minute inspection,
And fraught with useful personal direction.
This first the great St. Louis, Joinville wore;
And in those old times also countless more.
It signifies true "PRUD'HOMIE"
As part of real piety.
If what that means I now must tell,
"Good fellow" will express it well.
You see at once the lustre strange
Which will so through this jewel range.
You see the two can be distinct;
You feel this by a quick instinct;
For piety without this part
Will never quite content your heart;
It flames, perhaps, but 'tis, though high,
Pestiferous to make you fly.
Oh! let not Charron then be blamed,
When, sooth, of that he grew ashamed.
So this old gem, call'd "prud'homie,"
Belongs to true theology.
View it so—near that paste's false glitter;
And then, I think, that you will titter.

Charron will also yield the next
In a forgotten golden text
Call'd "THE THREE TRUTHS," which book he
wrote
When Plessis-Mornay seem'd to dote.
It shows that God exists, unless
A maniac's wisdom you profess;


That then, of all religions known,
The Christian sole a sage would own;
And that all sects which we behold
Are slips from the communion old—
The only true which does agree
With ancient Christianity.
So holy Catholic we call
This jewel which surpasses all.
By freeing men, as it can boast,
From what does grieve their hearts the most.
Mere paste, when new, may look more nice,
But I must tell the market price.
But then this gem, perchance you say to me,
Does not by rights belong to Poetry.
For elements incongruous are wrong
When thus infused into the sphere of song.
You say, methinks, for I know well your way,
That here I manifestly go astray;
You, loving Poetry for its own sake,
Must deem such clear professions a mistake.
It never in a real Poet lies,
You say, in verse so to theologize;
You add, that always Poetry rejects
The dogmas held by our contending sects.
That may be true; but then, just prove to me
That truths celestial are not Poetry.
This jewel here doth but display the whole
Of what belongeth to the human soul.
Confound it if you will with sects that fret,
But facts like this you can't make me forget.

Why words expressing nought will you thus take,
And talk of loving song for its own sake?
Antiphanes, methinks, was not so wrong
Exposing follies of the ancient song.
For what is Poetry, stripp'd naked thus?
What love you in itself? pray say to us.
Are brooks, and leaves, and ivy interlaced,
The Muse's glory when nought else is traced?
You say the spirit, so divine, of song
Recoils from all theology as wrong.
But Homer, Sophocles, and Pindar too,
Did they exclude what seem'd to them as true?
Olympus and its dogmas they deem'd high,
And towards their airy summits did they fly.
They never fancied that the Muse would sink
When leading them on such grave themes to
think.
Callimachus, aye soaring in the sky,
Was still a poet, as you can't deny;
And Thales, even in his Banquet, said
That Wisdom should to Poetry be wed.
In fact, all great song to the human ear
Has ever been religious and sincere.
Now what displays our dazzling, ancient gem,
But the full blaze of what did pierce to them—
Freed from the darkness which confined their
thought,
And to its native lustre wholly brought—
Clear from all stains, with radiant glory set,
To make true Wisdom all their vaunts forget?

No, ye great critics, hurl'd thus from your throne,
The Muse will all truth theologic own,
And, heedless of unmeaning, frantic yells,
Sing it serenely where she ever dwells.

But how I wander while these gems I show !
Still this at least I thought that you should know.
Public opinion is the rule, you said ;
But then, opinion changes with the dead.

Recurring to our gem in hand,
I want you more to understand.
'Twas deem'd of old that certain stones
Brought safety, and that science owns
The fact, which even Newton thought,
And, consequently, one such bought.
The greatest minds have yielded way
To wild old superstition's sway.
But here is the true Talisman
To cure more than the wide world can.
Just mark how solemn 'tis, and grand,
And all the while so bright and bland.
From it does flow an emanation
Which can e'en glorify a nation ;
As, sooth, all true historians know
Who study manners long ago.
As if for women solely made,
It casts all other gems in shade ;



And yet for men it yields a fire
Which can heroic deeds inspire.
Oh, look you ! call it what you will,
It is the finest jewel still.
'Tis for philosophers the stone
So vaunted, as the wisest own.
For men celestial 'tis a crown
Before which vanquish'd kings fall down.
For lightest wanderers, like me,
It shows where is felicity.
For 'tis not, sooth, as many think,
A charm to make men's spirits sink.
This ancient jewel is quite free
From what in newer gems we see—
Those new ones, which are thought to shine
As true philosophy divine—
Which many still take up in haste,
And find them only worthless paste,
As some hereditary choice,
Palm'd off as hearing Reason's voice
When more or less intensified,
Till all at length must be denied—
These new ones but perplex and trouble,
Though each soon proves an empty bubble.
While set in texts, oft misapplied,
Each always has a dark, weak side;
Stiff, brittle, and with cold to pain
And freeze our blood through every vein.
Such properties the paste possesses,
While suiting hypocrites' grave dresses,

Ephesian formulas that seem
No better than a gloomy dream,
Causing men's hearts to disagree
With its dark, grim philosophy.
The old has much no words express,
And that fits best our human dress.
If analyzed and decomposed,
You find 'tis not what you supposed.
It has one sterling property—
To give increase to charity.
It makes allowance sly for much
That grows worse at some acid's touch.
It wards off what will many scare,
From the unfortunate despair.
But then, 'tis meant for wear, not show :
Just try it, and its force you'll know.
" A sham " you call it then perchance;
But is humility a trance?
Are shams our wishes to obey
Commands, although we fall away?
With pride the heads of others cram;
But love like this is not a sham.

Alas for me ! who only show
What lies here—why—I do not know,
Unless that such is God's high will,
Unfathomable to us still.
It would be much if I could move
You now to give up all for Love—

To wear this nearest to your breast,
To count as worthless all the rest ;
Though this includes the rest as well,
Made precious more than words can tell ;
For all is deep, mysterious here ;
And nothing bright will disappear.
Yes, purchase it—heed not the cost ;
For such a gem the world's well lost.

The next we might style Common Sense—
So free it is from all pretence,
Set as you see it by Hénault,
The wise old President, you know.
“ No theologian then am I,”
He said to an opponent sly ;
“ But I'm a man for all that yet ;
Humanity I can't forget ;
And so I'll tell you to your face,
'Tis barbarism sole I trace
In the fine writings that you prize,
Which fill me with a sad surprise ;
They rob us of our faith and hope ;
Their way they seem not e'en to grope ;
The only way they know is death,
Discouraging, despairing breath.
Ah ! some resources pagans had ;
And they were not so wholly sad.
A box Pandora left them then,
At whose sly bottom's depth for men

Lay Hope, although 'twas cover'd all
By the great woes that them befall.
As if for evils of each station
There was reserved a reparation;
While we, barbarians tenfold more
Than they, would now give up that store;
We would now all things quite destroy;
The spiritual does annoy;
And all that we would keep is woe,
Unmitigated, even so,
Unless it be a mitigation
To revel in sheer desperation."
Theognis says that " Hope alone
Is left to men, now helpless grown.
Good Faith, that goddess great, is fled ;
And Wisdom, Graces—hence are sped.
On earth no justice is found more;
With truth no vows will Heaven implore.
The race of pious men is gone
With Law and Order one by one.
But while we live the sun to see,
Let Hope still wait on you and me.
• On sacrifices still attend,
On sacrifices to the end.
Let Hope receive our first and last,
For all the rest is fled and past."
Thus sang he. Then new ways I spurn,
And will to ancient thoughts return.
Great Joubert added to our gem
This circlet, as a diamond hem.

"No man 'gainst Christianity
Can without anger speak," saith he,
"Nor for it either, without love,
So clearly comes it from above."


Well, now you have this jewel seen;
And priceless such have always been.

Sooth, in this drawer are many more;
'Tis but a sample from the store.
But gems like these are seldom shown;
Men only prize what's like their own,
The world is torn and villanized,
Fantastic notions only prized;
'Tis Charron who does use the word,
If you should think it is absurd.
At least for the grim letter'd throng
To show religious gems is wrong.
Such things they deem of little use;
Let's see what else we can produce.
Review we then the Battle-field,
And mark what even that can yield.
Take the first gem that comes to hand;
You will its value understand.
Thus Clemency in Guise was great,
As old historians do relate,
To enemies where'er he came,
And hence his ever-glorious fame.

At Metz he was so high renown'd
For the compassion that was found
To dictate all his actions when
He saw his foes such wretched men,
Afflicted by both Heaven and earth,
With sorrows to which both gave birth,
That when the French at Thérrouane
Might all have perish'd to a man,
They cried out to the Spaniards there,
"Companions, let the war be fair,
THE COURTESY OF METZ RECALL,"
And hearing that they spared them all.

The next is Montmorency, Anne,
The type of an heroic man,
Who thus to a Franciscan said,
When wounded, stretch'd upon his bed,—
"Pray, think you that I do not know,
With eighty years of honour, so,
How in one quarter of an hour
To die, and yield to Death's great power?"

But gems like these so manifold,
Piled in such heaps cannot be told.
Yet would you still a moment stay,
Just let me fan this dust away.
Guevara's golden letters show
What men were knights so long ago.



His clock of Princes sounds an hour
When force was not the only power.
The "Tree of battles" marks a mine
Where mercy and true justice shine;
Or when on Reiffenberg you pore,
You find them in his "Toison d'or."
In Joinville, Bayard, you can see
How clement, good, such men could be.
Indeed, you should examine near
A piece annex'd to Bayard here.
The counsels of that Terrail old,
His uncle Charles, sooth, worth more gold
Than all the jewels that are new,
Which bring men's present thoughts to view
Of Nobles; and no contrast can
Portray what was a gentleman
Distinguish'd from the later tribe,
To which such virtues we ascribe,
Better than these short simple lines,
In which such deep religion shines.
There are who cannot pass my shop
And not let words of wonder drop.
Men whom all novelties inspire
Seem forced these jewels to admire.
Yes, gems of quite another day
Made sigh profoundly Michelet,
Who cast on them a lingering look,
Which, sooth, not e'en Sainte-Beuve mistook.
"Alas!" he cried, and struck his breast,
"These strange old things may yet be best.

Oh! who to us will now restore
Their spirit, known in days of yore?
They move us, but with sadness too,
When we return to see the new.
This pure, and sweet, and lofty soul,
Sprung from the Christian faith in whole,
Who will now give these back to us,
So strong and yet so simple thus?
Mere fatalists we seem to be:
And is it so ends liberty?
The future we cannot divine;
We hope; but these old gems are fine."

Here is another quaint thing, old,
That shows the spirit of the bold.
The morning of the famous fight
At Dreux, and ere the dawn of light,
The Mar'schal of Saint André went
To visit Guise within his tent—
Or rather room, to be exact,
And not distort the smallest fact.
Then seeing leave Trenchelion,
A gentle youth, who would be gone,
He ask'd him how was Guise employ'd;
Who said, he would not be annoy'd
Receiving him, since, ready there,
He had just said his early prayer,
Having heard Mass as he was will'd,
And Easter duties had fulfill'd;

That he would breakfast, mount his horse,
And then ride forth without remorse.
“ Oh, would to God ! ” the Mar’schal cried,
“ That I had knelt down at his side,
Had done as much ; for now I feel
What my dull heart seems to reveal,
That I shall have this very day
Somewhat, though what I cannot say.”
And well, forsooth, he did complain,
For in that battle he was slain.

These touches, drawn upon the spot,
Yield hints that should not be forgot.

This next is an old, curious gem ;
For it displays Jerusalem.
How few men at the present know
That to a king of France we owe
The Holy Places’ preservation,
Which was but granted to that nation
When the King Francis, named the First,
Did stop the Sultan’s raging thirst
The Holy Sepulchre to raze,
And leave nought for the future gaze
Of pious pilgrims to the spot—
A service ne’er to be forgot.
And, sooth, this one good deed alone
For many faults might well atone.

It may be doubted now, if kings
Would take such pains for holy things.


But to our gem return now we,
To mark the ancient chivalry.
Hold it well up to every light,
To see how pious was the knight
Who to Jerusalem would go
To worship rather than to know,
To delve, deny, pick up, explore,
Like us now who there seek no more.

Well, D'Arramont, for sake of prayer,
Would see the Holy Places there,
With all his troop, well guarded then
By the great Sultan's chosen men.
So to the Sepulchre they went,
Yes, all but one, with that intent,
And as devoutly as they could ;
For copy D'Arramont each would,
Save and except Bartholomè,
A captain, who had aye a way
Of ridiculing holy things,
As if his conscience had no stings.
Young, but yet odd, a mocker wholly,
Who laugh'd at ceremonies holy.
Then D'Arramont did stoop to prayer,
That he would do as others there.

Long he resisted, at last won,
For love of him it should be done.
Brave D'Arramont the youth did guide,
And kept him ever at his side.
Bartholomè, when once within,
For the first time did know his sin.
He said he suddenly did feel
An unknown love quite through him steal.
So down he knelt in humble prayer,
And found the good eternal there.
For ever afterwards he proved
A captain from all scoffs removed.
Renouncing his derisions vain,
A noble life he did maintain;
And grateful to the last was he
For D'Arramont's true charity.
Yet merry was he to the last;
But all his former jests were past.

Then mark, in yet another here,
How courteous manners do appear.
La Brosse was the most gracious man,
That paint for us old Brantome can.
His words were always soft, benign,
While sweetness in his looks did shine.
So wise was he, that Guise would never
Without his counsel aught endeavour.
You should have seen the joyous vein
After their dinner of the twain,

While playing at some merry game,
So pleasant, jovial, both the same—
Have heard their little fond disputes,
Through which their wit with mirth still shoots.
“ Well I remember in the dawn
At Dreux,” says Brantome, “ armies drawn,
That, meeting him, I bared my head,
When cheerfully he smiled, and said,
‘ O gentlemen, your heads why bare
In such raw, cold, and bitter air ?’
‘ Ah !’ said I, ‘ who deserves it more
Than he whom now I stand before ?
The noblest and the bravest knight
That draws in the approaching fight.’
‘ Alas !’ he answer’d, ‘ ’tis not so—
My own demerits well I know.
I can’t say what the end may be;
But my strange heart does tell to me
That on this field I shall remain;
And, sooth, I cannot but complain;
For now at my age I should pray,
Instead of seeing blood to-day—
Pray that I might from sins be shriven,
Pray that my youth might be forgiven.’ ”
So thus the future he knew well,
Who there amidst that carnage fell.
Methinks this jewel does display
The manners of a former day.




But things like these are white with
dust ;
The setting too displays time's rust.
The most are high, beyond my reach ;
Let's see what other gems will teach.

What find you in this other one ?
Alphonso, king of Arragon.
You read in it his grand reply
Unto a courtier standing by ;
Who says two hundred thousand coins
Of gold each senate now enjoins
To be deliver'd unto you
By Florence and by Venice too,
If you will now but give them peace,
And cause this bitter war to cease.
"Peace," said the monarch, "I don't
sell ;
I give it—understand me well."
Then here's a jewel stranger now ;
It shows you Guise's dying vow,
When wounded mortally, laid low
By poison'd balls of fell Poltrot,
To his young son he gave a kiss,
And said unto him nought but this ;
"God give you, what He only can,
The grace to be a true, good man."
You say I err ; this gem is new.
Well, be it so, if that's your view.

I thought it was not used much now;
But you know best, I dare avow.

This next does twinkle like a star,
It shows you him of Aguilar—
Alonso Hernandez—so well
Who at the Alpuxarras fell.
“Wounded now at my side,” he said
Unto his son, “away be sped.
Oh, let not all our house be crush’d!
Let these loud cries for me be hush’d.
Go, cheer your mother. Hence, and fly;
Live as a Christian knight, and die.”

Take now your newest gems, and see
Whether they all with these agree.
High courage in them, sooth, you find,
But do they show the self-same mind?
Are goodness, Christian faith, the sole
Last wishes of the parting soul
For those who catch their final breath,
And view them so awaiting death?
Say, do they signify desire
Of money, or of something higher,
Like this old Spanish king, who fought
Without the least commercial thought,
And fought alone for justice too,
As ancient jewels bring to view?



Is there e'en a resemblance faint
'Twixt new and these old brilliants quaint?
Take off your own, and both compare,
And scorn the ancient if you dare.

Then here again remark, we meet
With things long counted obsolete,
And yet to which our age returns,
As if we use all things by turns.
For in the days of knighthood old,
Soft women oft were surgeons bold.
The half of each having been given
To deep Minerva or to Heaven;
For Love would always leave a part
For wisdom in each woman's heart.
Such skill we know did always grace
Young ladies of the highest race;
So what our new-fledged Galens scorn
Deck'd princesses the noblest born.
Ah! sooth, you may that prelate cite,
Like many now who deem it right
To banish women from the throng
That chants the sweet religious song,
Who, as at Macon, did appear
To look on them with scorn and fear,
As not belonging to our kind,
So dark and foolish was his mind;
When the grave council did pronounce
That he such nonsense should renounce.

But here are gems that do proclaim
How great of old was woman's name—
How she incomparably more
Was loved and prized in days of yore.
Look, here are gems which all relate
To them, of Mediæval date ⁴.

I grant the setting is most strange,
Our present thoughts to disarrange;
But all within is above price,
Whate'er we think of the device.
Few readers now, perhaps, will know
The Benedictine Caffiaux;
But this is he who once did write
As advocate of women's right,
Like Coquillart, La Coste as well,
And countless more I cannot tell.
Then the old "GAGE D'AMOUR SANS FIN,"
Shows well how faithful could be man.
The Courts of Love, too, oft decreed
Some rules of which our age has need.
Would we had Parliaments of Love,
Though such things we feel now above;
For, witness only what they say,
At such great variance with our day,
That 'tis the duty of a knight,
Whatever woman comes in sight,

⁴ Rolland, "*Recherches sur les Prérogatives des Dames chez les Gaulois et sur les Cours d'Amour*," *passim*.

Still to endeavour her to please,
Diffusing round him mirth and ease;
Since at each age a woman can
Enjoy attentions from a man.
“Beware,” say they, “lest you disdain
The aged woman or the plain.
To them your delicacy show;
For gentleness acts always so;
Though, if they wish it, you may tell
Of great Montlhery’s battle fell;
Or else what’s grand, in the same breath,
The Constable’s heroic death.”

Just stop a moment here with me,
The tints within this jewel see.
Remember how in childhood’s dream
You thought old ladies’ love supreme.
Their smiles, their chat, their silky gown,
That rustled as they smooth’d it down;
Their dancing you upon their knee—
My stars! what fun and nightly glee.
Then nought about them harsh or rough;
Yes, that alone seem’d quite enough.
Their taking you in landaus too,
What raptures all this brought to you!
Indeed, as for myself, I swear
At Milan I saw nought so fair
As the Parade and equipages,
Which brought back my own childish ages.

Although so far I then did roam,
These so recall'd my English home.
For there I saw aged ladies all
The same as when I was but small.
'Twas evening, on a summer's day;
Long purple clouds like mountains lay
O'er houses white and verdant bowers,
Which did revive my childhood's hours,
When with kind matrons such I sat,
And heard them talk of this and that.
Now look in our old jewel bright;
This whole child's story comes to sight.
Let not that first love pass away,
Oh, call it back, and bid it stay.
Our antique jewel says all this,
If its sweet meaning you don't miss.
It says, Be courteous, kind, and gay
To women, though their hairs are grey.
'Tis not for you to make them feel
How time will o'er their faces steal—
How their sweet charms—yes, one by one—
Have wither'd, until all are gone.
But know, it rather is for you
To make them their own past renew
Just once more with bright Fancy's aid,
When so your homage has been paid.
See still, where beauty has gone by,
The face that once did charm each eye,
For even then what charm'd was mind;
And that the same you still may find.

'Tis thus, as by this jewel told,
We're taught to act towards women old.
It says, moreover, even we
In urging this are not quite free
From wanting delicacy such
As will content refinement's touch;
For, speaking of all women near,
The real question we should hear
Is not if we should treat them thus,
But whether they will bear with us?
'Tis that which we should whisper low
Unto ourselves, and seek to know.
You see how many things there are
In this gem brilliant as a star.
Now such a jewel, don't you think,
Will dazzle women till they wink?
For by the young, who need it not,
Its beauty ne'er will be forgot.
Men who respect the old, they prize;
And those who wound them they despise.
Dost deem I cannot prove this well?
And that I merely talk to sell?
But, sooth, like alchemists of old,
We find much more than can be told.
By dint of handling long such ware,
Of many things I am aware.
Though showing gems be now my part,
Go to—I know the woman's heart.

But I could bring you things more strange,
If you will with me backward range;
For Homer paints our knightly men,
So like they were to heroes then.
When Juno would seduce the God
Of Sleep, to make her husband nod⁵,
She offers him a throne of gold,
Which he refuses, frank and bold.
But when she offers him the bright
Loved Pasithea, all was right.
Is this the story that you find
In the new pastes that show the mind
Of those to whom is only dear
The heiress of so much a year?
Alas! the old Love Chevalresque
Would now be scouted as grotesque.
The world was younger then, you know;
So now their old, broad beards all show.
But there I'll keep my Homer's gem,
Just on the sly to laugh at them.


To this another is attach'd
Which for old quaintness can't be match'd;
Though men devoted to their club
May think 'tis shown their taste to snub.
"It is not all, forsooth," says one
Writing in an age long gone,

⁵ Il. xiv.

“ To have great princes round you then,
Great captains, and great gentlemen;
Men of grave counsel and of law,
From whom you can instruction draw;
To hear them talk of State affairs,
Of war, of hunting, social cares;
For all these conversations tire,
And soon you cease much to admire.
But to converse on this and that
With women, and to hear them chat,
So free from dull, proud affectation,
When they will truly know their station,
Will never pall upon your mind
When them what they should be you find.
The praises, therefore, will I sing,
Of Francis, first of that name, king,
Who thought a Court without their smile
Was not a Court of noble style,
And that e'en Fontainebleau would be
Without them only misery.”
Thus still 'tis contrasts that I show,
With men and ways that now you know;
When, sooth, each Romeo—rather cub—
Would give up Juliet for his cub.

So now again with wonder see
The value of my jewelry.
For Love, you see, itself is old,
Yea, older than can well be told.

And how with that can you dispense?
Ah! here I'll own my inward sense
Of what is solid worth, secure,
And what will last we can assure.
For look around you in our day,
And see what things do pass away;
At least, how many set their hearts
On modelling anew the parts,
Pretending that they clean, revive,
That which alone should now survive.
Such acids to dissolve they try,
That each gem melts into the sky.
All things on earth they will disturb;
Their restless will they cannot curb.
"A reformation there must be,"
Say they, "in all Society."
For many hearts they leave no rest:
Needs must they seek another nest.
For them remains a quiet spot,
Where all these tumults are forgot.
That spot is but a woman's breast,
For there old ways are left at rest.
Unbroken by these savage cries,
Which now around us frantic rise,
Or by the subtle, formal phrase
Of sophists hating ancient ways.
Her kingdom, sooth, needs no reform,
And nothing in a novel form;
And no organic changes there,
E'en to propose will any dare.



Yes, legislate away for ever,
And she will laugh at your endeavour.
Change as you may the hills and rocks,
She but your grand intentions mocks.
Kind Nature, like a mother dear,
Will hush all madness that comes near.
While all the wide world rages round
True peace and bliss with her are found,
With all the sweets of sweetest flowers,
With all the sheen of fairest bowers,
Lit by bright gleams from azure skies,
And fann'd by Love that never dies;
The same as in the days of yore,
Where nothing changes evermore.

But how the dust on all this lies !
Repugnance cannot much surprise.
Yes; dust is spread so far and thick,
I wonder not that some feel sick
Of me for spreading out such ware,
At which, perhaps, they only stare.
Enough. 'Tis plain this treasury
Contains not merely trumpery;
But even to suit lovers here,
These quaint old gems should be most dear.
And so it is now with the rest;
These ancient jewels are the best.
In every form here still you find
What graces most the human mind.

In Art and Letters it is so,
As those confess who mark their flow.
In every path that men can tread
No brighter gems can deck their head
Than these, all drawn from deepest mine,
Where things of real value shine.
Though set in antique style, yet they
Will their possessors richly pay.

Then, too, high honour I might bring,
Which, sooth, is an old-fashion'd thing.
It is not that which later sounds
When duellists will measure grounds.
The old, indeed, may, like the new,
Appear phantasmal to the view;
But then, the one is noxious flame,
That leadeth you through swamps to shame.
The other flows like heaven's own air,
And mounts to golden orbs more fair
Than all this whole world can command
Whene'er it would produce the grand.
The old, from Christian faith not far,
Does shine as will the morning star.
Just read the old chivalric books;
What say you? See how Honour looks?
If this should shine within your breast,
You may neglect and scorn the rest.

Then here's a gem, not commonplace,
Though some its lustre would efface:
Old Brantome set it, as you see;
Right precious is it still to me.

These are his words, and con them o'er,
You'll like old ways of thinking more.
"Ungrateful men, howe'er they try,
Are seen through by each honest eye.
Quite outlaw'd from all gentle files,
Their presence only shames, defiles.
Yea, hated even by themselves,
Must be these traitors, goblin elves.
Rather, I think, would they avow
All other crimes than that vice now.
For, what no framed excuse can serve
Alone will such a fate deserve.
With no pretence of covering clad,
Bared to the world is all the bad.
Quite naked thus they always stand,
However sly their vain demand
Just for some strip to hide the blot
Of their damn'd treason's branded spot.
All other vices can obtain
Some cloak, though more or less in vain;
Some rent patch'd, that is still for us,
Not always quite diaphanous—
Just something that at least approaches
To a thin rag to save reproaches:

But all ingratitude is stark—
Yes, naked, and no night too dark
To show its pure deformity,
And e'en disgust a Satyr's eye.
This e'en Egyptians, Persians, knew—
Its portrait, as I paint it, drew.
Then Treason is with it allied ;
The twain you never can divide.
For both are vile for this alone,
That obligation they disown.
Both traitor and ungrateful thus
Was the wretch Judas known to us.
What gain'd he by that blackest stain ?
His pay the very Jews disdain
To pick up, so still there it lay
Scorch'd by his touch upon the way.
Then truly I should like to know
What praise had Brutus for his blow
When killing Cæsar, his own friend,
Who such deep, anxious care did spend
To save him on Pharsalia's field,
Whose life preserved did joy him yield ?
And yet, like any drunken sot,
By Brutus was all this forgot !
For drunken was he with the thought
Of the Republic which he sought ;
From which he had so soon to fly
Disguised, and shunning every eye—
He and his comrades, one by one,
Through diverse gates, till all were gone,

To perish later in the field
Which never could true glory yield.
For, certes, such a hideous end
As Cæsar, murder'd by his friend,
No favour wins from any mind
That is not to all goodness blind.
Like Brutus perish'd many more
Of whom my memory has store;
And, would to God, ingratitude
Might never its due debt elude!
The world would then much cleaner be
Than it, alas! we often see.
For gratitude is royal, more
Than kings, and ever walks before.
The holy Church bids us to pray
For benefactors every day.
But, sooth, I never should have done,
Did I show all the crowns were won
By grateful men, as in our day
Napoleon does lead the way,
Who ne'er for any end or whim
Forgets a kindness shown to him.
And why? Because within his crown
This ancient jewel glitters down,
Old as creation, if you draw
Your wisdom from its Author's law.

This gem, so old, you see is quaint
When gratitude it thus will paint.

The new Humanity ignores
What all Antiquity adores;
For gratitude it thinks to be
Beneath true progress and the free.
Of Honour this must share the fate,
So both are deem'd quite out of date.
Italians, e'en Ireland and France,
In this respect are in advance
Of England, Germany, and Spain;
But whether these will long remain
Quite docile to the ancient spell,
Is what no man on earth can tell.

A thirst for change is in the air
We breathe; old virtues make us stare.
Let senates, legislators too,
Know those with whom they have to do.
All measures generous and wise
The man of this new type defies.
Statesmen can't reckon on the things
With which heroic story rings.
They must set out with this conviction,
That noble ways are counted fiction—
That governmental kindness rules
But slaves, 'tis thought, or priestly fools—
That force, brute force, and force alone,
Is the sole bridle men will own.
Of gratitude they need not drop
One word; 'tis only for my shop.

To which they'd better send with care
Old things that no one now will wear.

But why should I collect such things,
Since each to me small profit brings?
Sooth, dealing in such wares, I say,
Is folly; for it does not pay.
You see, by fingering them so,
I like the Jew you thought me grow,
Who uses not the gems he sells,
But what they're worth to others tells,
As symbols of the Christian creed,
Which in himself no virtues breed.
Alas! I feel the portrait true;
Though, sooth, it shows you nothing new,
Thus proving what at first I told,
That worthless are some things, though old.

But this is wandering in talk,
And you would now resume your walk.
Adieu. These cases may be closed;
There's more in them than you supposed.
At any time you pass my door,
Just step in, and I'll show you more.

THE STUDIO.

IN the leafy month of June,
When all nature is in tune—
Woods and brooklets, cheerful streets,
As in faces that one meets,
Trees and shrubs, each graceful weed,
That neglected plots will breed,
Walking with a thoughtful friend,
We to some he knew did wend.
Passing down a shaded road,
See us at their green abode—
Villa, standing by the way,
Once a tract of wood they say,
Lonesome in the days bygone,
Named from woods and sweet St. John.
Boys did play and birds did sing;
Mirthful sounds around did ring.
“Lo! it is the gate,” said he,
“Follow, only follow me.”
Tripping lightly o’er the green,
Here might fairies, sooth, be seen.
All seems so melodious, sweet,
Grass as made but for their feet,
Rich, luxuriant vegetation,
Flowers, too, from every nation—
Creepers, tendrils twining round
Stems, or carpeting the ground—

All things smiled and danced along,
As accordant with their song.
Coming to a pleasant shade
Where did end the winding glade,
A small door was open'd wide
By a grave sire, now our guide.

When suddenly, as if by magic might,
We seem'd transported to an Alpine clime;
For Monte Rosa burst upon the sight,
As when it issued from the womb of time.
The snow eternal tinted by the sky
At evening tide, you seem'd, methought, to
hear
The silence reigning in those regions high,
Whose solemn beauty made you gaze with
fear,
While roaring fell the cataracts below,
O'er rocky depths where dark pine forests
grow.

Before we came my friend in part had told,
And with a low, deep, somewhat mystic tone,
Of what within these walls we should behold,
Which a great, rich, and gifted sire did own.
A niece had he, and gifted like himself;
To Art devoted, and Philosophy;
Disdaining vulgar pleasures and all pelf;
In point of Art, though young, a prodigy.

In courage dauntless, and of lofty soul,
She soars on high and contemplates the whole.

He said that, as a bird, when frighten'd, flies
From branch to branch, and vainly hopes for
rest,

So she, in mind a native of the skies,
Will wander on, still seeking what is best.
He thought but lately she had sped and flown
To the firm rock of faith, and there would
stand ;

But, scared by some one's false, seductive tone,
Its vantage-ground she did not understand.
But then, he said, anon she seem'd to gaze
On its majestic heights, and feel amaze.

She question'd him of martyrs, and their story ;
She seem'd to wonder at their noble strain ;
She question'd him of days and legends hoary ;
And of life's contrasts now she did complain.
Some want she felt to satisfy her thought.

The present seem'd to pall upon her mind,
Some glorious object—that she said she sought,
Which e'en to Art itself her heart could bind.
He said that she at last must settle down
Where lofty sprites like her did win their crown.

Some heroine, methought, the maid must be,
Like Hachette, Labrille, of the ancient mark,
Or Foré ; or, perhaps, I soon shall see
Some other Jane who gives such fame to Arc.

For only of her courage spake he still,
Of adamantine nerve and purpose high,
To carry out the firm resolves of will,
Whatever dangers might assail her nigh;
And this, though index of a noble soul,
I own did not much touch me on the whole.

Thus was I now prepared to see a maid
Of lofty musings, scorning too, I wot,
The nets to catch unwary mortals made;
But of what we call graces he spoke not.
The int'rest that I felt, I say, was weak;
Content with what she wrought, I gazed
around;
To see more painting I did only seek;
And then a "Moses dying" there was found.
Upon the summit of a rock he lay
Alone, stretch'd out, his soul does pass away.

As when we light on some strange, solemn
thing,
Ne'er seen before, nor in the mind conceived,
We feel how poets ought of it to sing,
That sense of wonder might be thus relieved;
So did I ponder on that scene of death—
The sky its only witness and the rocks,
Until the thought, forsooth, did check my
breath,
Revolving, what imagination mocks,

The Prophet, God-sent man, the great, the high,
Passing but so, like one of us, to die.

But soon another curtain is roll'd back;
There is a landscape exquisitely fair.
It shows the Vosges and all that mountain track,
The plain before them dark in twilight air.
The sun has sunk beneath a purple cloud,
Yet gleams of red above the hills are thrown;
The crescent moon just peeping from a shroud
Of playful clouds that have around it flown;
A river dark, with beds of rushes tall—
Already night below, and that is all.

Wondering still, I stood and all survey'd
With admiration deep, while I forgot
The story just related of the maid,
Who, to my friend's amazement, cometh not.
At length to call her did the sire withdraw
An instant, letting us again admire;
A door was open'd, and then her I saw,
In plain and simple, homeliest attire.
But, what I ne'er expected, I did see
Of beauty's softest mould, a light and prodigy.

Full timidly she enter'd, as afraid,
Cast anxiously a look on all around;
For humble innocence, a very maid
That high-soul'd artist skill'd indeed was
found.

She said that animals one time to paint
Had been her fond and earliest desire;
But soon she felt how slight they were and
faint

To feed her mind, which needed something
higher.

That "Dying Moses" was her first attempt;
But from grave faults she knew it not exempt.

That evening view! At Strasbourg she saw such.

"But oh, that pathway through the osiers
dark,

How it is false, and needs another touch!

As you," she added, "can, I'm sure, remark."
That little path! Within myself I thought

I could have wish'd to kiss its shady ground;
For it another critic must be sought;

Unskill'd to blame it, I indeed am found.
With downcast eyes she thank'd me, saying low,
She fear'd I flatter'd, when contented so.

I did not say it, but I thought the while,

Though all around me is poetic bliss,

I wish'd not youth so gentle to beguile;

I said, "'Tis truth I spoke, and nought but
this."

I left; but in my mind the vision stay'd—

A brilliant vision, singular, sublime—

Creation's brightness vested in a maid,

Just lent to earth, but from a better clime—

A genius such as gifted souls adore,
With woman's gentle nature, which is more.

Fare thee well, blithe Maiden !
Child of Art, adieu !
Handel, Mozart, Haydn,
These were just like you;
Thy painting all melodious does their strains
renew.

What they heard thou seest ;
What no eye can find,
Soaring past the freest,
Thou canst reach in mind—
The source of beauty perfect, sound and sig
combined.

Caught amidst these clouds,
Aye conflicting so,
Thou wilt burst their shrouds,
And still higher go,
Till thou dost reach the rock where thou v
safety know.

Sweet as Love's own bower
Thou wilt find its rest ;
High o'er shades that lower
Will be then thy nest,
Preserved from all that woundeth, shelte
with the best.

Free to wing thy flight,
 O'er all fields to stray,
 Heaven's own joys in sight,
 Ne'er to lose thy way,
 Thy art will then reflect the light of endless
 day.

GRESSET'S ADIEU TO THE JESUITS.

ACCOMPLISH'D is the prophecy,
 Dear Abbé, I return to thee.
 The metamorphosis is past ;
 And so my days are mine at last ⁶.

Victim, as thou knowest, of an age
 That e'en itself ignores,
 Guided by the hand so little sage,
 That my fond youth deplores,


I hardly heard myself pronounce
 The things that I did then renounce.
 It is our tastes that make our lot ;
 That maxim should not be forgot.

⁶ Of course Gresset was not forgiven by the philosophers for these verses ; but still it does not appear that his genius really gained much on the whole by his having his days to himself in this way. See Sainte-Beuve, " Port. Contemp." tom. iii.

All mine were for sweet liberty,
Then how could I a captive be?
Yes; born for independence so,
My life without it had been woe.
The Church is tender, but man would
Pervert her if he only could;
Yes, make her cruel, to fulfil
Each hard, proud dictate of his will.
So to the altar was I led
By some who thought this best, they said.
But all is over now; my destiny
To follow, reason-guided, I am free.
But, friend, now hear my inmost sentiment,
Impress'd with which and sorrowing I went,
And left that holy and pacific door,
The world's wide fields so lonely to explore.
Yes, even while, inflamed, I burst my chain,
My heart did murmur and my tongue complain.
It e'en was with a deep and unfeign'd sigh,
That I at last regain'd my liberty.

Due are my deep regrets indeed I own,
To the kind sages whom I loved to see;
I lose their conversation's simple tone,
Their holy manners that were dear to me.

If now no more I live beneath their roof,
My heart at least will still be with them ever;
From all accusing them I'll stand aloof,
And credit those disparaging them never.



To those who know them but from rumours
flown
From darksome envy, they are, sooth, unknown.

Oh ! it is to me most sweet
To lay tributes at their feet,
Testimony wholly free,
Which no interest calls from me,
Neither fear nor hope can ask,
And no love of self can mask.
We are sever'd. No more fear,
And a voice impartial hear.

Yes, mortals, I have seen, I own,
Condemn'd, and yet but little known,
With hearts that nothing could corrupt,
Whose peace nought e'er could interrupt,
True solid minds to understand
The debts they owe their Father-land,
Their King, their God ; if more you ask,
Who ne'er for mankind wore a mask—

Who oft did grieve for others' woe,
While seeming to ignore their own,
And ever eager to bestow
All they possess on the unknown,
Quite prodigal of time for others,
Both tender, wise, and perfect friends,
E'en watching children as their mothers,
Man's good and love of God their ends,

Great benefactors secret even
Of their most unrelenting foe,
Too holy and too much like Heaven
Not what man's hatred is to know.
Let others, when they leave them, try
To brand their upright course with shame,
Their rule and thoughts to vilify,
To make a by-word of their name—
But as for me, I honour truth;
And, faithful to the thought I knew,
To those who loved and served my youth
'Tis thus that I will bid adieu.

ADAGIA.

PROVERBIAL wisdom, spread from early dawn
Of man's career, is as a dewy lawn,
Attractive to each heart that loves to stray
By nature's springs and on her greenwood way.
In bygone times its rills were thought to be
From shaded streams of deep philosophy;
Though even then their source when traced was
found
To be the common sense of man around.
But Aristotle, Chrysippus, and more
Than I need tell, would add their subtle lore.
Cleantes, Plutarch, Aristides too,
Zenodotus no less this wisdom drew.

Great Theophrastus also, Dæmon, Cato,
Old proverbs cited, as did even Plato.
Then with the Latins Varro was renown'd
For these deep sayings, which with him were
found;

While Roman princes often did reply
By citing proverbs when men would apply
To them for counsel in some urgent case,
Whose solemn brief words did all doubts efface.
In Christian times the use prevail'd as well,
As Father Cahier's learned page can tell.
But oft the proverb's dignity was lost,
As later authors proved, and to their cost,
Neglecting rules by which it had been train'd
To deck like jewels a discourse sustain'd;
And so, abused, these wing'd words, one by
one,

Did pass as obsolete, their fame all gone.
Erasmus grieved that such should be their fate,
And sought their glory old to reinstate.
His choice collection pleases as a field
That still can healing herbage richly yield,
With plants that but to look at are not ill,
And can some purpose of the Muse fulfil.
Let's enter then this pasture; and a song
Will rise spontaneous as we walk along,
While plucking here and there what strikes the
eye,
To teach the mind and please the phantasy.

"WHO FROM THE DOOR WILL ERR?" applies
To men, forsooth, so little wise
As from sheer falsehood to set out,
Like him whom we hear Plato scout,
Like many, too, I rather fear,
Who at the present day appear
In theologic fields to be
The advocates of phantasy.
The next, "FROM YOUR OWN HEARTH BE-
GIN,"
Is said to those who tell the sin
Of others, and neglect to cast
An eye upon their own life past.
Then, when men said, "BOTH PROW AND
STERN,"
They'd have you your whole aim discern;
Which can for some Wealth signify,
For others, wiser, Piety—
Two words conjoin'd suffice to tell
If you have placed your chief aim well.

Now pass to things of lighter sort,
As if to table you resort.
"FROM EGGS TO APPLES" means the whole
Of life's great banquet in the soul.
With eggs began the ancient feast,
And fruit denoted when it ceased.
These terms, then, of the old repast,
Implied but this, "From first to last."

Then, "TO BEGIN IS HALF THE WHOLE"
Can give sight to the blindest mole,
Who otherwise would grope along,
And all commencements esteem wrong.
Let artists, authors, con this o'er;
And they will put off work no more.
Con it let those who seek to fly
From evil habits; they will try—
And once to try is to commence—
They'll rise, escaping quickly thence.
That, "RIVERS WATER NOT THEIR HEAD"
To many false men can be said,
Who, to some distant objects flown,
Pass on, and still neglect their own;
For where the river takes its rise
May be all parch'd, while on it flies
To irrigate the distant fields,
Where rich fertility it yields.
"TO FOLLOW STREAMS AND FOUNTAINS LEAVE"
Is said when men themselves deceive
And others, loving to digress,
And never the main point express.
"NO MORTAL TO THE FULLER BRINGS
RAW WOOL, BUT FABRICATED THINGS,"
Does mean, that by degrees we call
Our students to the highest hall,
Who must with rudiments begin
Before they access have within.
"TO FISH IN AIR, OR HUNT AT SEA,"
Is to wish things that cannot be.

"YOU MUST OFT JEST, AND LAUGH, AND PLAY,
IF SERIOUS THINGS YOU'D DO AND SAY."
This Anacharsis, we are told,
Did lay down for a maxim bold ;
Since such is pedant's grave pretence,
'Tis boldness to speak common sense.
Then "BEAUTEOUS AT THE DOOR" denotes
The manners on which each one dotes.
'Tis youth's best dream—'tis love at sight,
Than which no portrait is more bright.
"THE VOYAGE OVER, SHIFT NO SAIL,"
Means, at the end let truth prevail.
Be not like those within the port,
Who to more wandering resort ;
Who, though they've mounted on the rock,
Again would breast the billow's shock.
Another saying, simple thus,
Seems well befitting some of us.
"LET CORINTH'S RICHES TEMPT, DRAW THEE;
TENEAE'S WOODS ARE BEST FOR ME."
Teneae was a hamlet poor,
While Corinth's splendour did endure.
Then too, again, the ancients said—
Fix well this maxim in your head—
"PRIZE MOST WHAT MEN MATURE WILL SAY,
THAT, TOO, FOR WHICH OLD AGE WILL PRAY,
AND DEEDS OF YOUTH, AND YOU WILL BE
PREPARED TO REAP FELICITY."
They said too, "WHAT'S ABOVE US LEARN,
AT NO TIME CAN BE OUR CONCERN."

Socratic words, meant to imply
That none to understand should try
Deep theologic, mystic things,
Nor mix in the affairs of kings.

"YOUR FRIEND'S WAYS YOU SHOULD KNOW,
NOT HATE,"

Is, too, a precept they relate;
And then, that "YOU SHOULD NEVER CHOOSE
BY YOUR MERE COUNTENANCE TO LOSE
THE PIETY THAT MUST BELONG
TO THOSE WHO WOULD SHUN SOCIAL WRONG,"
May be remember'd with effect
By some neglecting such defect.
Then, "SALT AND TABLES PASS NOT BY"
Means this, "Your time do not deny
To friends;" and "LET NOT SILENCE STOP
YOUR FRIENDSHIPS, LEST AT LAST THEY DROP,"
Supplies a hint most needed, right,
To those who will but seldom write.

These pithy sayings, too, extend
To Love's domain, and thither wend.
For thus we hear, "'TIS FROM THE EYES
THAT LOVE IN HUMAN BREASTS WILL RISE,"
Which proves a high and noble thought;
Since then 'tis Beauty that is sought.
"WITH ADAMANTINE CHAINS," they say,
"TO HOLD YOU IS THE LOVER'S WAY;"
While now, alas! it is with straws
Man to himself his best-loved draws.

In fine, that "LOVE CAN MUSIC TEACH"
Is still a lesson meet for each;
Since I doubt much if in our day
Experience prompts us this to say;
For then by music was implied
A mind harmonious, lofty, wide.

The ancients "POLYPUS'S HEAD"
Of vice and virtue mingled said,
And "NEITHER WITH NOR WITHOUT WOE,"
When men would fancy evils so,
Just like your nervous people soft,
Whom some wild dream perplexeth oft.
"DRINK EITHER FIVE OR THREE, NOT FOUR,"
Meant less of wine, of water more.
For the wise ancients did opine
That two parts water to five wine,
Or one of water unto two
Of wine, would then exactly do;
Which yields a lesson for the sort
Of men who drink their unmix'd port.
"A HERALD'S SPEAR," they also said
Of men who threats to smiles would wed;
Like those who with soft words of peace
Can never let their anger cease,
And who, with thoughts all white with fire,
Speak soothing words that fools admire.
Like some "Eirenikons" we know,
That only spite and anger show;

Like journals catholic—no less
That truth with low-bred scorn express.
“A DELPHIC SWORD” denoted, too,
A thing applied to uses two;
For that forth from the scabbard flies
To yield the offer’d sacrifice,
And then at other times to kill
Those guilty of an evil will.
“TO GIVE US CHEW’D AND BROKEN BREAD,”
As if to infants, scholars said
Of those who will tell all too plain,
Omitting nothing—labour vain;
Since not to trust a reader’s sense,
Dwelling on trifles gives offence—
A lesson which some artists need
That from grave faults their style be freed.
Then, “MOMUS TRY TO SATISFY”
To carping critics will apply—
Those offsprings of dull sleep and night,
Of whom old Hesiod did write.
“TO MAKE A SEWER A CITADEL”
Is on what merits nought to dwell,
With praise immoderate to try
Unworthy things to magnify;
Like some who talk of “branch” and “wide”
Their sect’s foul origin to hide.
“THE OAK ITSELF WILL HAVE ITS SPREE,”
You cannot that deny to me,
Was said to shame the gloomy wights
Whom nothing joyous e’er delights.

For Orpheus singing, as you know,
Made that old tree quite frisky grow.
" A SEVEN-HIDED MIND " is said
Of a strong, wise, heroic head ;
For Homer tells us that the shield
Of Ajax to no darts would yield,
Protected as it was with hides
Of seven oxen on all sides.
They also said, " AN OX IN TOWN,"
To signify a boorish clown,
With great and sudden honours raised,
Though for no gentleness e'er praised.
" AN ARGIVE SHIELD THOU DOST DESERVE "
Was said to those who never swerve
From purity and innocence,
And never urge a false pretence;
For with the Argives it is said
That boys in files were always led
In their processions, bearing shields,
Since such precedence virtue yields.
" CORD TO THE STONE " did but imply
The man of careful scrutiny,
Who with the plummet measures all,
Lest what might least incline should fall;
Not trusting eyes, particular
To make things perpendicular.
" A WOLF BEHIND, A DEPTH BEFORE,"
Explains itself; we say no more.
" A SINGER AFTER LESBIUS NEXT "
Was once the ancient Spartan's text,

To signify the second-best ;
For Lesbius did give them rest
By singing to seditious men,
Who, hearing him, gave over then.
"THE CROWS, NOT NIGHTINGALES, YOU'D HEAR,"
Was said to men who did appear
To honour bad men more than good,
Their sayings only understood,
As in our Senates oft is true,
Which sweet Montalembert well knew.
"AMBROSIA-FED" of men divine,
Was used in whom high grace did shine,
As in Lacordaire, best of men,
When writing on Saint Magdalen.
"AN EARLY SOWING MAY DECEIVE,
BUT LATE NO HOPES WHATEVER LEAVE,"
Were words to warn us from delay,
Employing not the present day.
"LET SACRED THINGS BE DONE WITH SPEED"
Agrees well with the Christian creed,
Which shuns all weariness in prayer,
And flies like light when God is there,
Accordant with old Homer's lines⁷,
In which such wondrous lustre shines;
For at all feasts divine, saith he,
You must avoid prolixity,
And long at them you must not sit,
But haste to rise, the scene to quit.

⁷ Odyss. Γ.

Then, "AS A DOG FLIES FROM THE NILE,"
Was said of those in ancient style
Who will to any art apply
And never perseverance try;
For dogs in Egypt who will drink,
In haste fly from the river's brink,
From fearing the dark crocodile,
That haunts the waters of the Nile.
"AN ATTIC WITNESS" did imply
One who could all mistrust defy.
And "ONE WHO HAS NOT EATEN HARE"
Was said when ugliness did scare;
For food of that kind it was thought
Conduced to beauty that was sought.
"A LOTUS-EATER" stood for one
Far distant from his country gone;
Who, quite forgetful of it, strays;
Which words can be explain'd two ways,
As any Christian sage can see,
Least versed in deep divinity.

The Greeks had short terms for each shade
Of crime or virtue, tersely made;
While we, with whom each fault abounds,
To tell each briefly have no sounds.
'Tis clear, too, that the ancients thought
More gravely of each minor fault
Which men at present oft commit,
Than now would most of us deem fit.

For thus "BOMOLOCHUS" implied
A wretch in crimes the deepest dyed ;
Yet, if its origin you seek,
'Tis men who near the altar speak,
While thinking, talking vain, light things *,
Instead of soaring on strong wings
To Heaven in a voiceless prayer,
But lounging idly, witless there.
"A ULYSSEAN COMMENT" meant
A false and cunning argument ;
And "TO EGYPTIANIZE" was then
To prove ourselves deceitful men ;
Which words no Viceroy need offend,
Since nations can their ways amend.
Then "TO IAMBIZE" they oft said,
When men were to reproaches led,
Term borrow'd from Iambic feet,
To express impetus most meet.
Then "RUSTIC HATRED" was the word
For all misanthropy absurd ;
Since that mere rustics hated best,
Was deem'd a settled point at rest.
By "ATTICUS STILL STRETCH'D HIS HAND
WHEN DYING," you must understand
A greedy wretch, or corporation,
Who to the end tries supplication.

* If this be disputed, I have at least the authority of Erasmus, who says, "Qui cum res divina peragitur, non faciunt vota diis, sed nugas inanes blaterant : qui mos hodie magnatibus magnopere placet."

To save some privilege or pelf,
Whose only thought is about self.
The ancients call those "HALCYON DAYS"
When men have calm, mild, tranquil ways.
To "ACCO-IZE" was said of those,
More numerous than you suppose,
Who with their own vain mind will talk
At home or when abroad they walk;
For Acco, as the Greeks have told,
Was one who did herself behold
In a bright mirror every day,
With whom she still would have her say,
As to another woman, tell
The selfish thoughts that pleased her well;
Like many who now saunter so,
And of themselves enamour'd grow.
Then, too, "MONOPHAGI" were men
Who dined, as in a panther's den,
Alone, and ne'er would others call
To dine with them within their hall.
"NEPHALIAN" was the term oft used
When abstinence was, sooth, abused.
For what was neither fig-tree wood,
Nor vine, nor myrtle, Grecians would
Call mere Nephalian; and so they
Sobriety by this would say.
Then "RHYPOCONDULI" they named
Those men of whom they felt ashamed,
When dirty knuckles they espied,
A sloven's mark they did deride;

So delicately nice were then
These polish'd old Athenian men,
Like third-class youths from out the mass,
Who yet with well-washed faces pass.
"DEAF, TOO, AS TORONÆAN PORT,"
Are words to which the Greeks resort
When bold, bad men they stigmatize,
O'er whom all admonition flies.
For that long harbour was in Thrace,
In which no distant sound you trace
Of the vast ocean roaring past,
While you within have anchor cast—
Affecting image to display
The deafness of the thoughtless way
Which we ourselves so often take,
And of ourselves such idiots make.
"TO PYTHOS ASK YOU STILL THE ROAD?"
Like those who question'd as they rode,
Were words used, full of execration,
For constant, tedious iteration—
The need for which is not gone by
As every day you can descry,
In those who ask and ask again,
Where is the light that they would gain.
Then, "BUNAS IS THE JUDGE," they said,
When causes would be never sped,
Never judged, finish'd, or pronounced,
That peace might not be all renounced;
As when the Calydonians vied
With Eleans; and would ne'er decide.

Since Bunas, when he knew that they
Would still suspend their deadly fray
Until he set the cause at rest,
Would not pronounce; mode often best,
True wisdom, as the Church well knows,
That never acts as some suppose.
For, with authority to speak,
To use it she does rarely seek,
Unwilling disputants should pray
Her to pronounce on what they say;
Resolved, howe'er long they debate,
That they should for her judgment wait;
Discountenancing Suppositions,
Detesting all strict Definitions;
Wishing that thoughts should fly beyond
All words, and never feel a bond
That would restrain their aspirations,
Their loves, their hopes, their admirations;
For words the most divine are found
In mystic freedom to abound;
So, while they're used to guide our tone,
Their whole sense never can be known.
Distributed in passing gleams,
At moments heaven quite open'd seems—
And, then, as if a curtain fell,
Men only feel that all is well.
So this true guardian of the mind
Reflection aiding still we find—
Disliking formal questions high,
Demands of Faith to multiply;

Most slow when call'd on to decide,
But leaving men a freedom wide;
"Non est de Fide," she replies
To her own Doctors when less wise.
For Faith is not a verbal sound,
To what is utterable bound.
Ethereal tones direct its flight;
But in bright clouds 'tis lost to sight.
Its voice is heard within the soul;
Its range extendeth to the whole.
The Church knows well her time to bide—
On echoes she will ne'er decide.
Since one end of all thought must be
Dissolved in vague infinity.
So much for Bunas and his aims,
Foreshadowing divinest claims.

"LET HIM MOST SKILFUL TAKE THE OAR,"
May still be now said as of yore;
And then the saying, "KNOW THE TIME,"
Yet rings as an immortal chime,
To warn those men, like many now,
Who obsolete and vain things vow.
"TITANIC ASPECT," then they said
Of faces that would make men dread,
So fiercely glancing all around,
As, sooth, can many still be found,
At least in France, as I must own,
When infidels will lead the tone.

That aye "THE GODS HAVE WOOLLEN FEET"
Are words that wants of all can meet;
For so, to judge men, soon or late,
The true God walks, past all debate,
In silence deep; you hear no tread,
As at the hour of midnight dead,
Until, as in the days of yore,
You're touch'd, and then it all is o'er;
Or rather then, oh! then, begins
The retribution due to sins.
But no, avaunt the Pagan style—
The Cross erect now stands the while.
So let us change the direful song,
And say, to you will life belong,
The true life—all forgiven, blest—
The final, everlasting rest.

So now we come to sing of Death,
And utter briefly solemn breath.
That "PARSLEY'S WANTED" was the phrase
To signify the end of days.
For that green herb on tombs was laid
After each dead man's grave was made.
But then, what follows sounds, sooth, grand,
When all its sense you understand—
For "PYTHIA AND DELIA TOO
ARE ALL ONE AND THE SAME TO YOU,"
Are words like to a solemn knell,
And to the grave funereal bell.

The Oracle did thus reply
To one who was about to die.
Polycrates, when founding games,
Had doubts about their fitting names.
The Delphian oracle would he
Consult, elate with victory,
Demanding whether Delian now
Or Pythian suited best his vow ?
Since he did choose to consecrate
Unto Apollo his new state.
The Oracle then answer'd thus,
In words that will one day suit us,—
“Pythia or Delia should not be
A question any more for thee.”
For plainly death it would not say;
Though soon he was to speed away—
A gentle, courteous, prudent word,
Which might from Christians too be heard,
With whom such euphonisms might
Agree full well with their true light ;
Since, though on heaven we fix our ken,
Forsooth, on earth we still are men.

Thus have I sought in verses to convey
The thoughts of sages of an ancient day,
Express'd, too, briefly, in the old Greek mode,
Which shunn'd a lengthy, tedious, prosy road,
Preferring quick, abrupt, and short-cut turns,
Directing him to Truth, whose bosom burns,

And choosing even difficult, dark ways,
As those on which the mind oft fondly strays;
Just as a boy would sooner climb than walk
Where no obstructions seem his aim to baulk.
They liked at times to throw you but a claw,
That you yourself the lion whole might draw.
I might have longer sung, embracing things
With which the Christian proverb later rings;
And, sooth, of him who cites you those of
Spain,
Methinks, if gentle, you would ne'er complain;
Nor yet of those that flow from Gallic soil,
Which would no grave oration ever spoil;
For, if discreetly used with tact and taste,
These old gems far surpass the dots of paste
With which your orator of latest mould
Will deck the pieces that he wishes sold.
But you I should offend if I were long;
So here must end my unpretending song.

THE LITTLE VIRTUES.

How oft, as on the grass I lie,
The smallest mites I see,
Amidst the herbs or in the sky,
Seem loveliest to me!

The tiny insect, drops of dew,
The primrose or the grass,
The brooklet that so winds in view;
What can their sheen surpass?

The little cloud that floats on high,
The small, bright, radiant star—
'Tis these that most delight the eye,
Or some pale blue speck far.

Nor is it only beauty so
That claims what is but small,
The tiny point, the gem, we know,
Outvalues columns tall.

The least of jewels, howe'er set,
You'll choose, I may assume,
As you prefer the violet
For its divine perfume.

Vast, lofty things indeed are grand;
'Twere folly to dissemble;
But little things you understand;
Gigantic make you tremble.

Just so it is in other spheres,
Where mind, not eyes, will scan,
Distinguishing what most endears—
The good that graces man.

Heroic deeds, like towering heights,
Delight, amaze, confound ;
Their lofty grandeur oft affrights,
Quells rivalry around.

To them deep homage still we pay ;
They have a mission vast ;
But, somehow, 'tis not every day
That we would have them last.

We do not hear that HEAVEN requires
Mere grandeur at our hands ;
It rather teaches and admires
What every hour demands.

Then let me sing the graces small,
Those little virtues sweet,
Which for our daily use can all
Prove more than great ones meet.

Although already I perceive
How faulty is the word,
Which in deep truth does but deceive,
And lead to views absurd.

For we shall witness how will play
These virtues great and small,
Still changing figures, we might say,
Like maskers at a ball.

The little like true giants dance;
The giants bend aside;
The dwarfs will need a vast expanse,
The great in corners hide.

You'll find 'tis true, past all debate,
For daily life's great feast—
The easiest are virtues great;
The hardest are the least.

But now the song didactic will require
A change of sound upon the tuneful lyre.

For little virtues will demand
Some gentle touches, light and bland,
Although the phrases used may be
E'en taken from philosophy;
Since these we must now social call,
True denizens of bower and hall;
And yet and yet these in our day
Are not thought much of, we may say.
For, first of all, they have no purse,
Being like children out with Nurse,
Who tells them they should trust to eyes,
In which their greatest bounty lies.
Of rhetoric they know no more
Than fairies in the times of yore,
Nor yet of grave philosophy,
With lessons of economy.

Indeed, they were not sent to school,
So Nature is their only rule.
And then their gifts, aerial sooth,
Seem only made to charm our youth;
Although, if all the facts were told,
They are more wanted by the old.
And yet tis said they have no claim;
They're often left without a name.
No school would ever take them in;
To recommend them scorn would win;
And as for grave theology,
At that door now they need not try.
So utterly despised are they
By those who need them every day.
Then, too, they never learnt by heart
To play the politician's part.
One way they needs must have with all,
Whatever men you choose to call,
Whig, Tory, Radical, or worse;
Like Balaam they can no one curse.
And this alone would fix a brand
On them which all will understand
As clearly saying, Trust them not;
They must be a suspected lot,
From having no vast ends in view
To suit great objects that are new.
Our age those things disdains the most
Of which no journalist would boast.
So little virtues must be left
Of all respect and praise bereft.

And yet in ancient times we know
That with wise men it was not so.
Theognis praised them in his day,
And Aristotle in a Lay
Or Hymn to Virtue, which remains
Alone preserved of all his strains.
The verses of Theognis, prized,
To spread these virtues all devised,
Were taught to children as a part
Of what all youth should know by heart.
On ancient tombs their praise we find
As traces of the noblest mind.
Thus Aristocrates is shown
As one "whom the fair Muse did own
And love, and to his ways impart
A grace that stole away each heart;
For he was gentle, free, and gay—
A sweet companion every day—
And ne'er indulging in dispute,
Which cannot social manners suit,
But all men still inclined to serve,
He never from that aim did swerve."
Menander, deep, refined the most,
Of these small virtues made his boast.
"Oh, by Minerva!" thus he cries,
"What with such goodness ever vies?
With this man I but spake awhile,
I knew at once he had no guile.
His manner, look, so moved my heart,
That to him I would good impart."

Language has great seductions thus,
And quite invincible to us.
You would refer me to some sages ;
The thought of them me quite enrages.
No; what persuades and wins the mind,
Is what in this good man I find."
'Tis character—not forms or speech;
'Tis something I can't name or teach,
Quite little to the sharpest eye,
And somehow blended with the sky.

Thus ancient are these virtues small,
Which should attract and charm us all.
Yet even these could be abused,
'Twas said by some who were amused
To see how men unjust and vile
Did seek the people to beguile
By seeming to possess them all,
In order better to enthrall
E'en those whom they unjustly ruled,
And by such artifice befool'd.
For these small virtues served to hide
Rapacity in men of pride;
Till poets said 'twas clear enough
That just men, as a rule, were rough.
The base extortioner would ape
These graces of such gentle shape.
But these were then exceptions rare,
Only to prove they could be there.

For little virtues are most free
Of all things from hypocrisy.
To us alone they come in sight,
As flowing from a source most bright ;
And often, as if strangely shy,
They seem to come mysteriously.
For they will play their lowly part
In all deep secrets of the heart ;
Since it is Pity only knows
All the heart's pleasures, all its woes.
And when possessing them you hold,
Like woman, what is never told ;
For it is thus she acts when speech
Her deep impressions cannot reach ;
To God alone a woman shows
All that within her breast she knows.
So often silence does belong
To little virtues fearing wrong.
But tender thoughts through them bespeak
A wise compassion for the weak ;
Though using notes but small and bland,
Will oft surpass in height the grand.
The little virtues, as a rule
Belonging to the highest school,
Are not of earth ; for they descend
From heaven, where they will have no end ;
Sooth, manifold the part they play ;
Through all temptations will they stray—
Still found each day in common life,
Or else confusion waits on strife.

Where high princes will assemble,
Where low folk would ne'er dissemble,
Where men meet for toil or pleasure,
Where in schools they would keep measure;
Where they would not count, at length,
Inhumanity as strength,
Proof of force in talk or writing,
Being violent and biting ;
When no whirlwinds you would see,
Harpies come to spoil your glee,
Snatchers and defilers all,
Like the fitful gusts and small,
That will cause the dust to rise
So as to obscure the skies,
As if senseless Fury, thin,
Would disturb your rest within,
Bitterness of purpose shown
By their wild, ignoble tone;
When the knight respects a foe,
Causes him a friend to grow;
When true lovers wish to meet,
When all seek some converse sweet ;
Where a maiden in her heart
Turns a corner at the part
Where it tells upon the sly
Of some loved one once so nigh;
When the senator would tell
Projects, and all mark him well ;
Where each father frames a home,
From which none would ever roam;

Where each master just would see
Faithful domesticity;
Where commercial life would hold
Customs of fair manners old;
Where religious men would seek
The salvation of the weak;
When you give and do not ask
Any to fulfil a task,
Laying burdens upon others
Which your proffer'd bounty smothers,
Adding some tyrannic clause
Which its grace from it withdraws;
When dependants you leave free,
Want no whims of yours to see
Carried out at times by all
Who you Benefactor call;
When all others you respect,
And their thralldom would reject;
Where the learned would unroll
Wisdom of the ancient scroll;
Where the grave would precepts utter;
Where the light would please and flutter;
Where e'en monks and nuns would see
Faith and blessed charity;
Where superiors would be dear,
And inferiors fond appear;
Where'er men would concord breed,—
There must fall the humble seed;
There each little grace must reign,
Counting all things its domain—

Things the gravest and most high,
Even sage theology—
There it ought to germinate,
Yielding fruit for every state,
Ever vital to produce
These sweet mites of daily use,
“SUPPORTANTES INVICEM”
Being the sole rule for them.

Then the bright seraphs who have used this
theme,
Like wise Roberti or De Sales, who seem
Alighting just on earth but this to sing,
And fan to fire sweet incense with their wing,
Proceed to tell us that these virtues small
Are safer much than those we greater call.

Safety, say they, for them springs,
From their being little things.
Proud they are not, since their aim
Can no great importance claim,
Yield no wide-spread reputation,
Bring you no loud admiration.
Lo! the orator most praised;
At whose end the world's amazed.
Glory long has fill'd his sails;
Vanity at last prevails:
So that voices from the crowd
Can explain his fall aloud.

"Yes," replies, no critic sage,
But a woman young in age,
Twitted by a sophist sly
For not praising wisdom high
When at last it seem'd to soar
Where she'd follow it no more,
"Yes ; it was the essence pure
Of Catholicism sure,
Which he utter'd day by day ;
That I said, and still can say.
But too oft the cork he drew,
Not to finish, many knew
By permitting all to be
Lost by prodigality—
Like an essence pass'd to air
All evaporated there."
Little virtues never end,
Like those of your far-famed friend ;
Not praised even when required,
No one deems them as inspired.
Practised, they are thought a debt,
Claim'd by mankind, who forget
All their value when received ;
But in this men are deceived.
Pardon a great injury—
You're extoll'd unto the sky :
Pardon some slight, vain offence—
It is deem'd a want of sense.
To no glory vain exposed
Are these virtues when proposed.

Glory is a thing, they say,
That can steal great gifts away.
Stolen these can never be,
Practised all in secrecy.
Fame ne'er lights on virtues small;
That is much, to grace them all.
In French the very term "Famed"
Means a person that is blamed,
That clear tongue is so profound
In distinctions that are sound.
Little virtues are right coy,
They but seek to yield you joy.
Elsewhere vanity is loud;
These are hidden from the crowd;
To men's consciences alone
Are these little graces known.
No one penetrates the thought
From which each short word is brought—
Silence, gesture, deed, or nod;
It is only scann'd by God.
This is what made Lucian say,
In his deep while merry way,
Nought could enter Charon's bark
But these virtues we remark.
Charmolaüs, Lampicus—
Strip they must for all their fuss;
Sophists, artists—none can pass
With the heaps they did amass;
Only Menippus was left,
Of good humour not bereft—

These small virtues, he implied,
Never fail'd men, never died.


Then, too rapid is their flight
To be snared by glory's might.
Movement, or a look, a tone,
Passes ere its cause is known.
On them no one gazes back,
As on a great glorious track;
Like Saint Gregory beguiled,
Who on his past conquests smiled.
Little virtues are preserved
From these perils, still reserved
For some men of glorious fame,
Whose long musings end in shame.
Then self-love and sly self-will,
That its own aims would fulfil,
Are not in these virtues found,
While in high gifts they abound.
To our nature difficult
Are their practice and result.
An hypocrisy quite new
Yields here virtue, and most true.
For what in us most rebels,
Face or tongue ne'er shows or tells.
Its perfection is to be
Natural—from surface free;
Since at last the depths are changed
By what has but o'er them ranged—

Transformation wondrous all,
Though the whole is counted small.

Again, these sacred monitors define
The little virtues as what always shine,
Are always needed, and can always be
Enjoy'd or used by men like you or me.

Extraordinary things,
Of which each great poet sings,
Seldom come or are required,
Though of course they are admired.
Little virtues every day,
Every hour, come in play.
When you comfort the forlorn,
Cheer up the unknown who mourn,
When you give a sweet reply,
When you soothe some misery,
You but use occasion thus,
Never wanting unto us.
But now list an Artist's song,
Counteracting Nature's wrong.

Behold a common instance here,
And mark the gracious end
That will so beautiful appear,
When you slight efforts spend



To make some gentle maiden smile,
In whose soft face you see
What others a mere fault would style—
Some sweet deformity—

Say, some divergence of the eye,
Or what would many pain—
Oh! then to breathe an inward sigh
For you would yield great gain—

To think how Innocence must grieve
Within her tender heart,
When she will e'en herself deceive,
And try to play her part—

Yes, try to please, with modest grace,
What pains her still to hide—
Oh! then you doat upon that face,
And scorn whole Beauty's pride.

Which seems a bait without a hook,
As the old Greeks did say,
That captures not; although a look
You cast and pass away.

But thou, O gracious, loving soul,
Though spoil'd thy vest may be,
Thou hast the hook beneath thy stole
To seize and capture me.

And woman's wish to please is what
Her Maker gave her too;
Although the reason of her lot
Must be unknown to you.

To you a total stranger still,
For her your heart does glow;
Her inward sense of beauty will
Cause your hot tears to flow.

No choice is left you on the spot;
You are resolved to see
A mystery we fathom not,
To feel her bound to thee—

To love her for that sheer defect,
To worship God, and say,
Oh! what may she not then expect
Where bliss and beauty stay?

While in your own heart's deepest core
You ponder secretly,
Resolved to love her all the more,
And bless her inwardly.

The Grecian woman was conceived
A temple to support;
But woman now has charms received
Of a still nobler sort—

To waken genius, lighten toil,
And then to let us see
A mind which features cannot spoil,
From all defects so free.

'Tis not a perfect outward mould ;
'Tis inward graces shine—
A delicacy can't be told
Surpassing yours and mine.

"I am no sculptor," says a scribe ;
"But had I all that art,
Some outward blemish I'd describe,
To touch and melt the heart."

Menander's eyeball show'd defect,
Yet Love for it was blind ;
What hardly some would now expect,
It closer him did bind

To Glycera, who loved him so
That nought can be compared
To her fond letter that we know,
In which such love was shared.

If ever Love was heard to breathe
A heart upon the tongue,
'Twas for Menander's front that wreath,
When she those sweet words sung.

If Love can play so well the part
Of little virtues thus,
Sweet Charity should move the heart
To teach them unto us.


He ceases, and then all will laugh around,
But what he utters thus is true and sound.
E'en lowly rank's faint traces can supply,
By contrasts harsh, fresh beauty for the eye.
Its marks, detected even on the fair,
Add charms with which no splendour can
compare.

The rich a perfect costume always wore,
But sly, poor shifts embellish ten times
more.

You see, these things as blemishes appear,
And for that reason then the whole is dear.
E'en poets hear this doctrine on their
way,

And proof unquestionable every day.
'Tis said by Masters, that some rhymes,
though bad,
Are better than the best that could be had.
Thus imperfection has its own charm still,
And, what is more too, have it ever will.

So incidents familiar every hour
Of little virtues show the secret power.



But take an instance far more common, trite,
Which brings their action still more into light.

High breeding in some country places
Is of no breeding to show traces.
The little virtues prove to be
Of use in hospitality,
From which new fashions some withdraw,
Disparaging its ancient law;
Some leave their guest to starve, if he
Has any grains of modesty.
The little virtues deign to press,
Don't wait till he his wants express,
Eradicating aims "to save,"
And making hosts in small things brave,
Thus checking the insidious rise
Of old men's vices, which surprise,
When avarice glides in to spoil
A feast, and e'en a long life's toil.
So right familiarly they serve
These ancient graces to preserve.

But, sooth, I never should have done
Were I to name the crowns they won.
The little virtues won't admit
That giving pain agrees with wit;
They'd never offer flutes to Pan,
Melischus-like, or grieve a man;

For they involve great tact and taste
To wound not ; though they move in haste.
Melischus should have thought of reeds
Which Syrinx metamorphosed needs,
Recalling her with whom Pan ranged
When she to hollow reeds was changed,
And how his present of a flute
That mourning lover could not suit.

Then sages from the depth of mystic lore
Proceed to show us, what impresses more—
That all these minor graces, now and ever,
Do meet our reason's constant, great endeavour—
That they are strictly reasonable all,
Or what perchance you rational would call.
For though all virtues must with reason grow,
These lesser, they would teach and have us
 know,
Are full of deep philosophy as well,
As of the other elements they tell ;
Full of what Johnson own'd and Shakspeare
 taught,
What far surpasses some ascetic thought,
All its keen irony and ravings fine,
Which would our studies and our minds refine—
That good sense " sterling " which we must
 employ
When we would practise these small virtues coy,

Which e'en within the schools their part will play,
And check each proud word that the great would
say;

For "Potuit" with Scott they all will own;
But "Ergo debuit" is not their tone.
However, waving now scholastic strife,
Let us attend to scenes of daily life.

What does common sense then say
Of small virtues and their way?
Ask you upon what they rest?
'Tis (what Reason will attest)—
On the weakness of the wight
Whom you bear with as is right.
Sooth, it is a weakness such
As could flints with pity touch.
Then to aid men are they brought
By the lightness of the fault.
Scan these faults just one by one,
Small when all is said and done.
Then to this attention call—
Oft these are not faults at all.
Here is but a strict translation
Of what merits admiration.
Sanctity of ancient times!
Music can't exceed these chimes!
Men judge each by their own whim,
And e'en blame what graces him.
Further, all these sages say
(Would such reasoning might stay),

That to be supported, all
Need, whatever each we call.
Yes, forsooth, we, we ourselves
Foolish are, and faulty elves.
We are all beginners, sooth,
Howe'er long is past our youth.
With indulgence to dispense
None can think who have good sense.
So, in fine, the point they prove
Is, that rational is Love.
Reasonable, howe'er small,
Are these little virtues all.
What the holiest advise
Must belong to all the wise.

But now, methinks, 'twere well that we define
The qualities that cause them thus to shine;
Although for me to sing of things so pure,
I fear seems pride that no one should endure.

What care does Nature take that never we
Should do each other scathe and injury !
Come, Plato-like, let's seek familiar proof,
Nor from what shocks the vulgar keep aloof.
There are provisions in the human frame
Which clearly from a loving Artist came.
Mark the two lads who walk before us here,
With arms entwined, close to each other dear.

The one is barefoot, while the other treads
In clumsy boots which his fond friend ne'er
dreads.

You laugh at me, of course, for wondering so
That Hobnail never touch'd his comrade's toe.
But while they skipp'd or saunter'd on so fast
I shudder'd, and had no resource at last
But to conclude a miracle was there,
When feet ne'er touch'd though distant but a
hair.

So anatomically there must be
In this defence a real prodigy.
'Tis only, of course, nothing but the skill
Which form'd our bodies to our Maker's will.
So, guarded slyly by the elbow's shove,
The feet are thus protected from above;
And this arrangement, showing such design,
I call'd miraculous—at least divine—
Denoting we were meant at times to walk
Just so, and closely to each other talk;
For if we pyramidically rose,
We should be forced to stand far off as foes.
Well, now, in mind the little virtues serve
Ends quite analogous, and never swerve.
For minds are often tender, like the feet
Of this poor urchin who does haunt the street,
Unfitted for collision with the coarse,
The sharp and heavy; having no resource
But thus, almost entwined, to pass along
Together, softness, side by side the strong.

.

And yet just mark how confidently they,
Seeming to touch, while never wounding, play.
It is the physiology of mind
That thus produces what is always kind.
You tremble lest the hard the soft should touch.
It does not ; and the marvel is as much
As when you see the rosy, slender feet,
At each step seeming heavy soles to meet.
It is that little virtues come in play,
As we can no less witness every day,
Constructed just to suit each passing whim
As wondrously as the admired limb.

But come, a truce to this Socratic diction ;
And let us sing of truths more bright than fiction.

Lo, Elysian fields appear !
Zephyrs, birds, and brooks we hear.
Flowers sweet of every hue,
Distant hills enhance the view.
Here is what will cool your breast ;
Here with toil is balmy rest.
Here, 'midst steep and craggy rocks,
Winds a path that roughness mocks,
Lakes and rivers, and the field,
Can the joys of Eden yield.
For, but list the dulcet song
Showing the small virtues strong.
Gentleness will you delight ;
Sweetness reigns on all in sight.

This is what De Sales instils
In pellucid words like rills.
Moderation is a flower
Fit to deck true Love's own bower.
What would e'en that bower be,
If such grace you did not see?
Things must not alone be small;
Microscopic must be all.
Not contented with "the mite,"
Or the "cup of water" bright,
Love still smaller things demands;
Lost, Imagination stands—
Thought which will a body seem,
Like the shadow of a dream.
What your eye can never trace
Must yet flash across the face.
What your mind can't e'en conceive,
Must its secret mark there leave.
Yea, too small for utterance
Are the things that Love advance.
'Tis not tones of voice or looks—
Things e'en found in Ovid's books—
'Tis quintessence of them all,
Visionary, less than small.
Only lovers them can know;
Ask, and they will say 'tis so.
Go along, you see this not;
All the same for them I wot.
They see mountains; you are blind;
Such is still the lover's mind.

Then through other common fields
Mark we what life's region yields.
Patience, like a cherub fair,
Or youth modest, will be there.
Nothing singular you see
Which opposes unity.
Common life will here be found,
Which enamels all the ground
With such florets, you perceive,
As no tedium ever leave;
No surprise or grim mistrust,
Nought but what esteem you must,
Common, simple, daily used,
What can seldom be abused.
Here e'en saints appear to be
Jocund, human, youthful, free.
Here, as in a golden cup,
Kindness yields the "Pick-me-up,"
Sweet and cheering wholesome drink,
When the pensive heart will sink.
Here austerity you find
Condescending to each mind,
Eating what before it lies,
No reproaching, scornful cries,
Deeming that itself can be
Truest, kindest charity,
Far more real from the first
When it chooses not the worst,
But assents to tastes of others,
And its own wish wholly smothers.

Then, forsooth, I needs must mention
The soft willow Condescension,
Drooping as to kiss the ground,
Near the little Daisy found,
Bending to the gentlest gale,
That will fan the lowest vale.
Then, the haste that moves but slow
Is an herb that here will grow.
“Soon enough is well enough,”
Will not say your zealots rough.
But De Sales, and men like him,
Fear Impatience and its whim.
All things they would not embrace;
One or two they’d have you trace;
Little, but that little good,
Is what’s best they understood.
Contradiction is not here;
Nought like that assails your ear.
Obstinacy with its roots
Clear’d away, what Nature suits
Will spread fragrance through the air,
With which nothing can compare.
No aversions here will blight
Blossoms that would soothe the sight.
Imperfections e’en will play
Parts that suit a summer’s day.
Little virtues scan them o’er,
And find nothing to deplore.
Great De Sales in this you hear;
Are not all his counsels dear?

Would you now the sum have told ?
List, or, Artist-like, behold.

Sweet Indulgence e'en for those
Who you know, and don't suppose,
Will ne'er pardon you a fault,
Words, or actions, or a thought ;
Good, for once, Dissimulation
Seems not seeing degradation
Or defects which others con
And still cite and dwell upon ;
Pity that with those will mourn
Who seem downcast and forlorn ;
Gaiety of heart as light
As those mounting out of sight ;
Suppleness of mind, which bends
To each fancy of one's friends ;
Though at first one may not see
Quite its whole philosophy,
Which ne'er envies when it finds
Greater depth in other minds ;
True Solitude when wants
Can be cancell'd without vaunts,
Sparing others all the pain
If aloud they should complain ;
Vast, true Liberality,
Constant Generosity,
Which, when it cannot do much,
Still demonstrates itself such ;

Affable and polish'd ways,
 With which truth for ever stays ;
 Cordiality sincere,
 Which can in the face appear—
 Suavity, in short, on all
 Chance occasions, great or small,
 In our words and in our looks,
 And what is not in all books,
 Suavity in thoughts as well,
 Such the virtues I would tell.

! then, what bard has hitherto declared
 our strange result? To what they are compared
 the great page, where words like Nature found,
 tray exactly what exists around?
 these little virtues shown unto a foe—
 a God, Creator of the world, you grow.
 our smile is liken'd to His glorious sun,
 which resemblance to Himself is won.
 the unjust, a look, a word that's kind,
 ! God's own image shines from out your mind.
 ! all this, mark now, still a certain fact!
 then, to friend and foe let us so act.
 ming no honour, howe'er high, so vast
 when these little virtues with us last ;
 en a sweet smile, a soft reply, a nod,
 pensing sunshine thus, make you like God.

close our task your minstrel then should sing
 ir pure, celestial, and eternal spring.

For these, not like the Nile, that overflows
From sources that no mortal e'en yet knows,
Come gliding down from Eden, and, like rain,
Spread verdant beauty o'er the fertile plain.

Yes ; little virtues, when they flow,
However far they wend,
Producing all that fairest grow,
From wells divine descend.

Quite Little call them, if you will,
And Human too, but know
In heaven does spring that small pure rill,
And they will widest flow.

For cascades through the heights that fall
Are often lost in spray,
But the clear brook that winds so small
Will to the ocean stray.

These little virtues yield no foam,
But on they glide for ever;
'Tis through " Forget-me-nots " they roam,
To depths you fathom never.

At once in love with them you fall,
Like Tyro in the song.
No river-god will you appal—
Such love no more is wrong.

Through meadows sweet at first they glide;
You know not what they are;
A ditch? a brook? till, rivers wide,
They reach the Ocean far.

Where their fond name at last they lose,
Themselves, mysterious all,
Whatever to define you choose,
Grown infinite the small.

For who shall fathom charity,
Or say where it does wend,
Save in the blue mysticity
In which life's mountains end?

THE LITTLE JOYS.

WESTWARD of Paris, in a village fair,
That skirts a wood which stretches far and wide,
With gay pavilions scatter'd here and there,
At one long, narrow street's or road's wall'd side,
A friend of all the Muses does reside.

The trees luxuriant, the enclosure high,
In which is but a narrow door, and small,
Screen from the eyes of all who pass there by

What stands within that trellis'd fragrant wall,
A dwelling which the Swiss a *châlet* call.

No sooner have you pass'd this humble gate
Than Eden seems to burst upon your view;
Nought you there see of pride or pompous state,
But that which, old, is still for ever new,
The nameless charms which can our hearts renew.

'Tis not the *châlet* picturesque and fair,
'Tis not the fountain and the rushes tall,
Which shade the clear and spangled water there;
Nor floating leaves aquatic, bright and small,
Nor the cool, verdant slopes, refreshing all

Who, from that sunny suburb's scorching glare,
Must envy such a verdant spot of rest;
It is that unseen something ever there,
Which makes you feel that life itself is blest;
That undefinèd joys are always best.

"The master is at home," was what I heard
From an aged smiling woman at the gate,
Who let me skip on lightly as a bird,
Not even asking me my name to state,
Nor ushering me on with sullen gait,

But telling me to "mount the outward stairs,
Through some one window then to pass within;
For such an entrance master never scares,

When strangers such would an admittance win;
All joyous faces are of his own kin."

I mount; I try the casements one by one;
The last flies open, and within am I;
The shrinking fears a moment felt are gone
At the first glance of his right friendly eye,
As me thus entering he did now descry.

"Forgive," I said, "forgive me if you can;
I enter as a burglar in the night."
"Nay," he replied, "but as a gentleman—
A gallant, courteous, well-conducted knight,
You entered freely, gaily, as was right."

His form was stately, and his garb but rough;
A jolly English tar he seem'd to me;
But something in his face proved quite enough
To stamp him fraught with high gentility,
With Nature's true and grand nobility.

This was the man who wrote on little joys,
The tiny things that make a happy day;
This is the theme that now my lyre employs,
Eschewing pompous sounds that nothing say,
That use to gladden life no mortal may.

Oh! why in black should Poetry be clad,
Or veil'd in unimaginable weeds?
She plays her part when she cheers up the sad,

Nor, drawn from troubled fountains, doubting
breeds,
To fructify of life's worst woe the seeds.

Nor is her office even to upraise
The soul to musings visionary, wild,
Such as alone our poets now will praise
As genuine and true however styled,
With which I fear not few are much beguiled.

Methinks if she would raise us to the skies,
She should not shroud us round in earthly gloom;
Ecstatic, joyful, should be her sweet cries,
Not like the voice of vampires o'er a tomb,
But as a child that smileth from the womb.

True pleasures often are a vague delight,
Which words cannot define or e'en distinguish;
Sooth, evanescent wholly to the sight.
To paint them would be simply to extinguish;
Though them to praise, this sage did not relin-
quish.

But his pure style was simple as a song,
Antipodal to gravity of schools;
So pedants thought there must be something
wrong
In all his stories and in all his rules;
For academic pride the vain befools.

With high obscurity contented, he
Disdains the sentence of the letter'd throng ;
His theme, his Attic taste, delighted me ;
And so I would transfer the first to song ;
For singing joys so little can't be wrong.

One stamp, however, all these pleasures bear ;
It is engraved in a Virgilian line.
That " God doth grant the peaceful leisure there,"
Is the spontaneous cry when they will shine,
And cheer recipients more than sparkling wine.

And if at times our song be somewhat wild,
Interpret all as did Imperial ears
When Bardo at a feast spoke like a child,
And, casting off all grovelling human fears,
Began what his best rhapsody appears

When bursting forth and ending but with this—
" I speak as one insane, perhaps, to all ;
Through too much joy I prattle on amiss ;
Indeed, I know not what such words to call ;
But to my ears they never never pall."

There are no little joys ; for joy to be
The infinite from high heaven must have flown ;
There must be pure, unmix'd felicity ;
That fact, commencing, I will freely own ;
So e'en my title yieldeth a false tone.

Though still, in one sense, little we may call
What springeth from a tiny source or stream—
A gleam of sunshine on a trellis'd wall—
Some fancy, unsubstantial as a dream—
Content with what suggests or what will seem.

So here, as with the virtues lately sung,
Sooth, great and little are but each a word ;
The first are with the latter found among ;
To think they differ, is to be absurd,
For each of Paradise is still a bird.

So fearlessly the least things I will scan,
Since in the least the heavenly spark will shine ;
From Eden comes the joy that comforts man,
Whate'er the cause, the gladness is divine.
Let, then, a thankful heart be ever thine.

To have discover'd what I sing of here
As if, sooth, others knew it not as well,
No claim I proffer, so as to appear
Like many who revive old things, and tell,
And sound a trumpet, that the whole may sell.

But I would sing for some unlike the nation
That Chastillon of old so deeply knew,
When, to supply them with some occupation

Abroad, a war with Spain he would renew;
Since other joys for them, he said, were few⁹.

Men who would otherwise all rage within,
Being by nature quarrelsome and bold,
Stinging, restless, to Mars himself akin,
While only loving to distract the fold
Whose little joys can never all be told;

Since deep within their souls does ever dwell
A peace profound and harmony unsung.
'Tis of their sweet content I now would tell,
As if for this alone my harp was strung,
Although 'tis things ineffable among.

It is an ancient theme, too, that I sing;
For Tycho was the little god in song;
And proof from Grecian poetry I'll bring
That to his office it did then belong
To grant these little pleasures, never wrong.

" 'Tis I," he said, " who can all these bestow;
Invoke me, therefore; 'twill not be in vain;
When careless of great projects you will grow;


⁹ "M. l'Amiral voyait bien le naturel de ses gens, que s'il ne les occupait et amusait au dehors, que, pour le seur, ils recommenceraient à brouiller au dedans, tant il les connoissait brouillons, remuans, fretillans et amateurs de la picorée."—BRANTOME.

Of me, I think, you never will complain,
If false ambition should be on the wane;

“ For what a god both popular and small
Can grant with ease, if me you only heed,
I freely, gladly, quickly give to all.”
But to the true Elysium let us speed,
For, sooth, of Tycho we have now no need.

But how shall I these pleasures sing ?
They fly with such a rapid wing !
Just lighted for an instant here,
Then flown to other objects near !
Like swallows, they o’er all will skim;
Each following its changeful whim.

Expeditions you will try,
Though you cannot just say why.
Travels long will not agree
With this true felicity.
Travels—yes, I must confess,
Are more sad than words express.
Where you are, you do not know—
No, nor for what end you go;
What law reigns, or who does sway
People amongst whom you stray;
What they believe or what they hold;
What warms them for you strikes cold.



No one you will recognize,
Dress'd in such a foreign guise.
You become a thing—no man;
Travelling is all you can.
“Make not wretched thus thyself,
Wandering, a restless elf,”
Sage Leonidas once cried,
“Over the whole vast world wide.
If thou hast of roofs the least,
But one spark to cheer thy feast,
Crusts of bread, of salt one grain,
Travel not. At home remain.
Be content with what is near;
That for you should be most dear¹.”
“He who wishes happy days
Never from his country strays,”
Said Menander; “but there, free,
He remains, if trusting me.
Otherwise, 'tis pain and strife;
Better to depart from life.”
But a trip some fair, bright day,
Proves like a sweet poet's lay.
Horse or foot, a boat and oar,
What on earth would you have more?
Thus Antiphrilos was seen
Ready for such joys, I ween:
He who sings his bed of straw,
From which he could comfort draw.

¹ Antholog.

Only to be once afloat,
Planks for table in a boat,
Playing but at give and take,
Him could truly happy make.
What he liked best was to hear
Cheerful boatmen chatting near.
That to him great pleasure brought,
Who things exquisite ne'er sought².

Alas! young lordlings of our day
Will not through little pleasures stray.
They pass to friends from shire to shire,
Not Nature's beauties to admire,
Like studious youths, who love to rove,
With book in hand, through upland grove,
Or to salute each rocky seat,
As if an old, dear friend to greet,
Recalling thoughts, though ne'er forgot,
With which they last saw each fair spot—
No, not for them the verdant lawn,
Or breathing free the spring-tide dawn.
They pay their yearly visits so,
And small joys never dream or know;
'Tis for the "Battue," and to boast
That they, 'twas writ, did kill the most.

² Antholog.

See the Rus-in-urbe next,
With what is it ever vex'd?
Separated from the crowd,
So as not to hear too loud
All the grim world's voices sad,
Stunn'd by which grow many mad,
Yet still near enough to hear
What to you is ever dear:
Solitude, and yet near friends,
Crowds and still with your own ends;
When you wish yourself to find
With your fellow-creatures kind;
Such the problem that you solve
When you little joys revolve.
In your garden, howe'er small,
You indeed can have this all.
Rakes, or shovels, or a spade—
Why, for these you have been made.
Trim and water all your flowers,
Lo, you are in Eden's bowers.
Garden meaneth Paradise,
If in Hebrew you're precise.
Jessamines and Heliotropes,
Who midst them and Roses mopes?
Flowers have mementos bright,
They bring loved friends back to sight.
Lilies, Lilacs—what a grace!
Poems in them all you trace;
No fatigue! such true content!
And all, too, from the heavens sent.

There, obedient to the Queen,
Custom as she's call'd, you're seen.
For three queens all must obey;
Since Necessity, they say,
And her stern, grim sister, Law,
With her, men's obedience draw.

But your garden may wear gloom,
Yielding for remembrance room.
Then you wander to the field,
Which can sun or shelter yield.
In the shade you sit and read,
Your companion a tall weed,
Not to be disdain'd, although
That it is a weed you know.
Then in Spring or Autumn-tide
"René's chimney-corner" wide—
Sunny, sheltered, fragrant spot,
Where that king is not forgot,
As still in Provence you see—
Can afford you tranquil glee.

Midst the little joys you find
Common links of human kind,
All antipodal to pride,
And of which the range is wide.
Yet these lowly things, despised,
When once tasted are most prized.

Well might Æacus grow tired
Of Ægina's isle admired,
When upon that lonely ground
It was only ants he found,
Till, as we are taught by Fame,
Men and women they became;
And, sooth, Jove evinced great tact,
Willing that accomplish'd fact.
Oh! 'tis joy immense, to see
Gracious sociability;
Hearing youngsters shout and chaff,
Speech dissolving in a laugh;
Far from all those apes who wend
Where 'tis grace to cut a friend.
Manners all proportion'd there
Won't politely chill and scare.
Dangeau is a mock Seigneur;
Whate'er dealers may assure—
A mere copy, as we say,
"After lordlings" in a way—
Not his own e'en, scrawl'd to pass
Through some party on the grass;
"Garden party" is the word
Where all commonplace is heard;
Where they'd say, "Good man, Corneille,"
By such words themselves reveal.
Save me from the vulgar high!
And upon the straw I'd lie.
Yes; place side by side such moulds,
And a contrast one beholds.

'Tis just contrary bents ;
'Tis the fight of elements.
Thus you see how small the spring
Which yields pleasures that we sing.
Cowper need not then have thought
That no small joys he had sought ;
That his joys were all extreme,
Like some wild ecstatic dream ;
For the things that made him glad
Were what all of us have had,
Simply such familiar toys
As supply your costless joys.
But what ruin'd all his hours
Was his creed that ever lours ;
Which on one side made him be
Stripp'd like lightning-blasted tree—
Like some others still, forsooth,
Who will load with error truth—
Truth so bright, so joyous, free,
As pure Christianity.
Marcus Argentarius more
Pierces to its heart's deep core.
For 'tis thus that poet sings,
Vibrating transparent wings.
“ When the evening stars I see,
That golden quire joyously,
Dance I will, and never mar
Circles of a single star.
Then, my head with flowers crown'd,
Sooth, quickly is my lyre found,

Whence I draw melodious tones
Such as Heaven ne'er disowns.
'Tis in acting so that I
Keep the concord of the sky;
In accord with nature so
Is this harmony I know;
For great Nature, all divine,
In the heavens thus must shine."

"Joy profound," Montaigne does say,
"Oft is more severe than gay."
Pagans said, "The gods do sell
All the pleasures that are well."
This last thought ne'er suits my lyre;
Such dull views will rather tire.
Yes, e'en joy profound is light
As the darting sunbeam bright;
And, as for "the gods' bazaar,"
Prices there from great are far.
In our lap sweet Heaven aye pours
Joys the human heart adores;
And Simonides was wrong
Analyzing each thing long,
Till at length he nought could see
But one vast perplexity.
Best are they who do excel,
And by what means cannot tell.
Sweetest is the joy when you
How it sprung up never knew.

Just as you can taste the wine,
And its causes ne'er divine;
For what makes it that or this
Shrewdest chemists always miss.

Little joys are order'd so,
Weary of them you can't grow;
For they are contrived so well,
That ne'er cloying is their spell.
When intense, they don't require
What deep critics will admire,
When a pleasure seems to last
Till almost you wish it pass'd,
And "amaritudo" seems
That which each the most esteems;
For a joy maintain'd too long
Grows insipid, and is wrong;
These, be sure, will never stay
Till you wish them far away.
Soon they vanish into air,
Rather, no one can tell where.

But since I have named Montaigne,
He shall once more grace my strain.
"From all sadness," then saith he,
"Speaking frankly, I am free.
Neither love nor yet esteem
Feel I for that sickly dream;
Though 'tis given for a vest
Unto all things that are best—

Wisdom, conscience, virtue too—
Garment that will never do,
Silly, beastly, hideous robe,
If its texture you will probe,
Base and cowardly as well,
Spiteful, as Italians tell.”
See these heroes, victims sad
Of prosperity, the bad—
Idleness without desire,
Which can never aught admire;
Silent, prudent, drowsy, ranged,
From all simple joys estranged.
While in others Fancy shoots
To show “Gardens of Greek Roots”,
Those of Primrose-hill complain
That no primroses remain.
Fontenay shows them no rose,
As Parisians still suppose;
Romainville no lilacs bears;
Montmorency, when each dares,
Woods and open slopes to tread,
Yields for them no cherries red.
But mud and thorns there they find,
To all Nature’s beauties blind.
Country scenes for them are sad,
Cheerful cities are as bad.
Joyous roads and meadows sweet
For their eyes are never meet.

³ “Le Jardin des Racines Greques.”

Not for them the lamb that skips,
Nor the bird that brooklets sips ;
Not for them the dog that bounds,
Nor the grove that music sounds.
When their declamation ends,
Gloomy thoughts their only friends,
Hung upon the trees they're found,
Or their brains all scatter'd round,
Or their bodies floating there
'Midst the stream, infecting air,
Fish'd for, are discover'd then;
Or the end of such sad men
Is each other e'en to slay
In the duel's darksome way;
Or, what Janin says is worst,
Into poetry they burst,
Chanting dreadful reveries
In despairing melodies.

All men have their mournful hours ;
Bear with them we do as showers.
It is bootless to complain;
Suffer them we must as rain.
But upon your soul be shame !
Fie ! you merit Poet's blame,
If you have not in your sight
Visions that can make all bright,
Some past deed remember'd well,
Good, that could an angel tell.

When the contrast thus we see,
We can better judge of glee—
Burden of my present song,
With what does to joy belong.

Oh, far from joy vain Fashion's tribe,
Which Juvenal did once describe
In words that still would suit the flock
That cruelty does never shock.
Oh! not for us the hateful sport
Of those who to some pale resort
To kill the doves that they let fly,
That dames with blood may feed their eye—
Those dainty maids of highest race
In whom the Roman dames I trace,
Who with their soft, white, bending hand,
Would thus the death of men command.
In Juvenal they might behold
How like they are to those of old ;
Though what care they for satires now ?
Sport they must have, it skills not how.
The hunters who will panthers slay,
And force some plaintive goat to stay,
Just to entice the dreadful beast
To some spot chosen for his feast,
Of their own sharp remorse will tell
Like the heroic Bombonnel ;
Although you know his act so brave
Will serve whole flocks and herds to save.

But you, oh ! you who kill the dove,
What can you have to do with Love ?
And if you are not on his side,
Yourself we hate and we deride.
The crown of little joys belongs
To no one who thus Nature wrongs.
So, as a prelude, let me say
What soundeth strange in this our day,
That, sooth, to win this subtle prize,
Demands what with you only lies.
You must deserve it by that grace
Which ornaments the human race—
By your simplicity of tone,
And such as is to artists known,
I mean those artists who excel
In using all these pleasures well.
There must be, too, “ I know not what ; ”
All this must never be forgot.
Contentment of an honest heart
Will still include the greatest part—
Contentment of a soul at rest,
Of a cool head ; and each seems best.
Your custom must be pleasure too ;
And this almost alone would do.
Then nothing else but that grows old,
As with our eyes we can behold.
The whole involves a secret deep,
And one that we should never keep.
Its depth no artifice must shroud,
That all may hear it in the crowd ;

Although it rests a secret still,
That ends not here, or ever will.
A sixth sense some say it implies.
Oh, the great, deep, and glad surprise !
The sixth sense is required for love ;
For Poetry that mounts above ;
A scent, a tact, a taste as well,
Enchantment of which those can tell
Who sing of castles in their strain
In their imaginary Spain,
Of favours all exceptional,
And nothing yet deceptional ;
Of voices floating in the air,
Of visions to make cowards dare,
Æolian harps and melodies,
Of sweet, harmonious gaieties ;
Of banquets spread for all our kind,
For bodies, and still more for mind ;
For urchins that on straw must lie,
And for which kings themselves may sigh.
The men or women who thus feel
Have riches which no thief can steal.
These master-pieces of creation
May yet be found in every station.
For them the sun, the shade, the rain,
For them the minstrel's sweetest strain.
For them at dawn the cocks will crow,
That song with mirth delights them so,
To mark their last accentuation,
As causing quite a great sensation ;

As if birds well knew all our rules,
And were of verses ready tools.
Shall I still add another joy?
To imitate them tries the boy;
And, I heard say a woman full
Of praises, "does it beautiful."
These bipeds without feathers soar
To-day as in the days of yore;
For them deep silence has its sound,
All noises are melodious found,
To go and to come back are one,
Their feast is never, never gone,
With unseen armour when asleep,
At rest while constant watch they keep;
All these most inoffensive men
Are still the best defended then.

But mark, now, here what little things
Bring joy upon their tiny wings.

Sundays! how shall we express
Pleasures of the Sunday dress?
Pleasures of a "Sunday out,"
'Gainst which grumblers raise a shout?
Joy to see ourselves so fine;
Joy to see all others shine!
And in honour of the day,
Whate'er bigots choose to say;

For a custom ancient thus
Proves itself as good for us.
These are little joys of home,
E'en abroad if you should roam—
Innocent coquetry,
Fêtes of domesticity;
Fatal to the aims of pride,
Which, of course, it will deride;
Dear to nature and to youth;
Part of theologic truth.

Little joys will also tell
Softest themes remember'd well.
Even in the London street
Memories, perhaps, you meet—
You yourself are an *Hôtel-
Cluny*, where are piled pellmell
Things belonging to the past;
For in life all passes fast.
There you see the shady grove
Where you once did sit or rove;
There the bridge where once you sought
The unknown one of your thought;
There the spot where first you spoke,
And a faithful love awoke;
There the trysting-place so long,
Just as in the rye-bloom song;
There good faith, and love, and truth,
Ope'd a real fount of youth.

How can purest bonds commence,
If such dreams you banish hence?
So these joys in mem'ry dwell
As their limpid, deepest cell.
And when joy is humble thus,
Happiness revisits us.

But from Hymeneal heights
Let us sink to lower flights.
See how even summer showers
Spread delight through hawthorn bowers—
How the setting sun still yields
Visions of Elysian fields—
Erytheia's ruddy isle,
Blessed spirits without guile,
Isle of the Hesperides,
Golden fruit that ever stays.
Feel how early dawn can be
Rapture's vital energy—
How e'en each hour of the day
Charms in its especial way—
How the city life delights—
How it human hearts unites—
How the woods and pastures wide
Can enchant on every side—
How the little joys will spring,
Just like larks upon the wing,
And to high heaven upwards soar
Till you follow them no more.

But still to fresh details let us descend,
And on each source some tuneful moments spend.
Diversion is a philosophic word,
Though oft applied to purposes absurd.
It means that drawing of the soul aside,
That artful tacking 'gainst the furious tide,
When, by a change of thought or turn of face,
The force of evil we can oft efface;
And this, howe'er we use the word, is still
The end which by amusement we fulfil.
Now, mark how little joys will oft prevail,
When graver studies might not much avail.

Shall we, then, revert to sport,
Whither youth will oft resort?
Saltu, cursu, disco, still
Do express its fervent will.
Fights in jest, pretended strife,
Are its condiments of life.
Shall we to the window fly,
Pluck the joy that passes by,
Watch the plants e'en growing there,
Through which often peep the fair?
Street-doors also I would cite,
When the postman comes in sight,—
Friend so welcome oft to all
For his precious packet small—
Angel, rather, that will shine
Coming with St. Valentine—

All bright joys from little things !
 Sooth, their sum there's no one sings—
 Friendships, hopes, and moderation,
 Acquiescence in one's station,
 Reason sound, that endless feast,
 Oh, how happy are the least !

Nor forget that source of joy,
 Letting nought too much annoy,
 Ready from the first to say
 In Euripides's way,
 That with facts you won't contend,
 Which would simply nothing mend.
 If you did, he says that they
 Heed not, but will no less stay⁴.
 Angry, then, with things to be,
 Is a grief from which you're free.
 Though to them it's quite the same
 Whether you be wild or tame.

Thus, then, from ancient classic pages
 I can still cite the words of sages.
 Where'er Menippus found himself,
 He proved to be a cheerful elf;
 His counsel, given from the dead
 To Chiron, can be briefly said.

⁴ *Τοῖς πράγμασιν γὰρ οὐχὶ θυμοῦσθαι χρεών,
 Μέλει γὰρ αὐτοῖς οὐδέν.*

" Things present love, and feel assured
That they can always be endured."
It was this temper which defied
The scrutiny of Charon's pride,
For nought besides his bark would hold,
However men were rich or bold.
The stripp'd philosophers complain'd
That he his ancient airs retain'd—
His frankness, freedom, careless style,
His lofty views, his mirth the while.
They bade him doff these in his turn;
" But," said Mercury, " these knaves spurn.
Yes, keep all that," he said, " ne'er fear;
That lightness even still is dear.
Embarrass it will no one now;
So pass, embark, for all their row."

Were I to distinguish nigher
Joy's small sources, I should tire.
But a nobler Muse I'll ask
To pursue this tuneful task.

'Tis in the London streets that we begin,
With harps amidst the din.
Oh! softly sweet the sound
To those who stand around,
And little pleasures win.

The comely youth is spell-bound there;
The thoughtful passing stranger feels no care;
Each heart upon each face lies bare;
None to speak or stir will dare;
The deep contentment you can see,
The mystic, peaceful reverie,
The charm that lurks in secrecy,
A vibration in the air,
 And nothing more,
 And nothing more,
Doth cause this joy that is not rare.

Now on Thamesis flowing let us glide,
Or urge the skiff against the swelling tide.
Soft is the pleasure when we pass along
And list the birds and gentle Zephyr's song.
But when, the stream resisting, we impel
Our prow against the curling lines that swell,
Oh! then begins the long, rough tug of strength:
O'er the hard bench we stretch our wearied
 length;
With all our force our weight we backward
 throw,
Though still the struggling boat will move on
 slow.
But when the farthest upmost point we gain,
Then all is smooth and rapid once again;
We swiftly glide down the clear crystal floor,
Fly past the bending weeds, and dart along the
 shore.

So here again we find the little joys
Which Nature, kind, to cheer our youth employs.

Then still, once more, to sentiment we turn,
And to the gentle flame it makes to burn.
Drink Lethe's waters, drink, but also know
That love, true love, is not extinguish'd so.

Something flashes through remembrance, of the
past it is a semblance,
And I see before me loved ones who are dead
since long ago;
What! art thou still so near me? and so un-
changed thus to hear thee?
That I still see nought so clearly as thee whom I
once did know?
No, not vainly, nought so plainly as thee, whom I
once did know,
When with me, thou, loved so greatly, wouldst so
familiar grow?
'Tis a day-dream, only so.
Yet I saw the young ones playing, and my own
with them were staying,
And I thought of happy mornings though my
days will ever flow;
"They are still the same as ever," said I, "and
so now play with them again will I;"
But gone they were that instant, just with the
gentle winds that blow.

How could I see them clearly? Yes, I say so
clearly?—to my eyes they all did show.

'Twas in mind, and only so.

Thus, then, a smile suffices, or a sound,
And a sweet, pensive joy does float around.

A student, seated nigh,
With book and cheek in hand,
Will aid you, then, to understand
How little joys beneath the sky
Are not more soft than grand.
For mark his gladsome face,
In which such cheerful thoughts you trace;
Nought with the bliss of mind keeps pace.
He meditates an ode, short words, a tale;
A spark on tinder will avail
To cause a flame of lofty fire;
So now each hint can him inspire;
And e'en his thoughts to Heaven will fly,
While at each cadence he will cry,
“Before me pass the days of yore,
The present days so bathed in bliss that I ask
nothing more.”
The passers-by admire the happy sign,
And all the bliss of inward joys divine,
So little still is what does make them shine—

A page; no more,
Yields ample store :
Some lines of ink;
Anon you think;
And then you want no more.

Midst little joys a little book
In some sly, fragrant, shady nook,
May thus be counted not the least
Of this true happy life's rich feast.
The French said, " Peu et Prou " of those
Whose mode of study they suppose
To be the best for heart and mind ;
And here not much to change we find.
Remembrance also loves to dwell
Upon the page that pleased us well,
While sitting once 'neath forests dark,
Or near some bushes in a park ;
For these are still wound up with all,
However trite, or rough, or small.
The book itself, whate'er it be,
Retains, with them, its charms for me ;
Although, like Bonhomme Richard, all
May be what you would homely call,
Yet still 'tis somewhat if it tells
Just aught on which the mem'ry dwells ;
As when it says, " From one lost nail
The whole horse-shoe may quickly fail ;

The horse-shoe wanting then, you lose
The horse, the very best you choose;
And then, the horse thus lost to sight,
Adieu the horseman and the knight."
Then, too, short sentences we love;
E'en proverbs we are not above;
No, nor the books in which men cite
While thinking it is they who write;
For some say that citation just
Invention ever equal must.

How literary heroes fight,
Methinks, is known to every wight.
Yet, only but to name their books,
Agrees not well with sunny nooks.
To name them a French critic thinks
Needs sound at which true courage sinks—
That iron breast, those hundred voices,
In which the Epic Bard rejoices.
Their marshall'd hosts have battles gain'd—
That fact, he says, can be maintain'd;
But they are battles which have not
Much profited mankind, I wot.
Still less have they conduced to grant
That rest of mind for which we pant.
Whereas your little books we take,
And sweet companions of them make
For our serene and quiet hours
Within the spring or summer bowers.

In the mere interest of your health
You take up little books by stealth;
Like John de Muller, when he wrote
Of one on which he used to dote ;
“ I read it often, sooth,” he said,
“ Just as a calmer for my head,
E'en as a medicine you would take,
An anodyne for soothing sake ;
All so serene and so content,
It satisfies my deep soul's bent.
It costs the eye no pain to see
Such clear and bright benignity,
And so, untroubled by pretence,
It seems the breath of common sense.”

But what are all these charms to him
Whose lip can touch the crystal brim
Of poets, sages, living near
The haunts that may to him be dear ?
As when I heard great Cuvier's voice,
In Boissonade's did so rejoice,
Heard Villemain, Guizot, Cousin too,
Who but by fame are known to you,
Or saw Chateaubriand the grand,
Saw even Lamartine the bland,
Montalembert—that paragon,
Lacordaire's friendship also won !
Alas that others should have stray'd
From truth, and are a by-word made !

Like him now looming in a fog,
Who would be buried as a dog,
Casting on human letters shame,
Though they immortalize his name—
And Michelet—but now I stop
And wait until the curtain drop.
The Luxembourg could boast of men
Who were the wide world's great charm then;
For, with their little books in hand,
The good alone you understand;
The ill they of each other say
The zephyrs bear from you away;
And so you can admire the more,
And all their authors' faults ignore.
But rivals judged by rivals, heard
Would show them all a vain, false herd;
And then your joy would soon depart,
And leave you with an aching heart⁵.

But to the Luxembourg return,
And sit beneath some marble urn.
Alas! dear Bailly, thou hast gone,
And left me themes to ponder on.
Thy circle of aspiring boys
Comes back with songs of little joys.
My period spent with them, past long,
Must be remember'd in my song.

⁵ Sainte-Beuve, *Causeries*, tom. xi. *Pensées*.

Myself I felt identified
With all their pleasures and their pride,
Since loyalty for these young men
Was part of true religion then;
And lawful kings, with duty free,
They honour'd and rejoiced to see.
So chivalry for them was still
Of little joys a constant rill.
Above our heads such stars appear'd
As made the air we breathed endeared.
Salinis, Gerbet, Lacordaire,
Lamennais, not then set, were there.
Then others nearer us were shown
Whose names were to us all well known—
De Cazalès, De Carné too,
De Champagny by name we knew.
Grave Ozanam, and many more,
Were even thought to haunt our door,
Where all "good studies," it was said,
Had found within their fountain-head.
I thought somehow my native station
Was wound up with the Restoration.
Whose writers, poets, pleased me well—
Yes, even more than I could tell.
When Royalist and ancient France
Was the pure flag they did advance.
Sons of the noblest in the land,
For Faith and Honour would they stand;
Nor, sooth, can later times be named
Which have their style or notions shamed.

To me it is a joy, though small,
That I once saw and knew it all.
The Place de l'Estrapade was not
A school to tremble at, I wot :
The master was the best of men ;
I know it now, and thought it then ;
For his fine type, to me so dear,
Seems holier from year to year,
As we reflect upon his way,
And think of what he used to say.
Then twofold institutions he
Would found to serve society—
The "Correspondent" was for truth,
Saint Vincent's Conference for youth ;
Yet, dreading the least breath of fame,
To neither would he leave his name.
Oft at his side we sat among
Those with whose fame all Paris rung ;
And orators the most renown'd
To lecture us were sometimes found.
Thus Hennequin would thrill our blood,
While, hearing him, we breathless stood.
These lads, indeed, small pleasures knew
As here and there in pairs they flew.
Each spring they had their expeditions
All in one troop, with no divisions,
When Montmorency's forest wide
Beheld how fast they all could ride,
And Enghien's Lake did never miss
Their naval fights, each Salamis.

The Seine their slender limbs oft felt,
When all their neighbours seem'd to melt.
For from the isle Saint-Louis they
Would in the river plunge and play.
The schools oft saw the loyal lad,
Whose face made each Professor glad.
But 'twas the Luxembourg that knew
The joys that they from study drew.
Dispersed by Revolution's breath,
Each still to each was bound till death.
D'Esgrigny and Du Lac remain
To me join'd by an endless chain;
For there it was our links grew first
Which no succeeding time has burst.
But now behold them, how they sit
Beneath the trees and feast on wit.
Each with his precious book in hand,
Some classic page, or, what is grand,
Some tome of ancient chivalry,
Or meditative revery.
Yea would they con some holy page,
For youth was holier than age,
Which, at that period, would but sneer,
Too dry at aught to drop a tear.
Well, all this is recall'd to me
When the sweet Luxembourg I see—
The whole seems like a picture old,
By which some little joys are told.
The Restoration gave the frame;
But, sooth, no artist it would shame.

Those groves and slopes with flowers rare
Embalm the thoughts that linger there.
Yes; while recalling little joys
We still must sing of student boys.
O comrades dear! O Master holy,
Dispel our present melancholy.
May we all meet one day on high
To reap true joys and never sigh.

But haunt we still in thought again
These gardens, and no more complain.
How many still in some sweet nook
Will sit quite ravish'd with their book!
Though still the source is little, sooth,
The stream but as a dream of youth.
But names of which I never tire
In little books can much inspire.
Oh! thanks, great thanks to them are due,
They act on minds like morning dew
Upon the rose in the parterre,
For oh, what bright, fresh charms are there!

Then poets we must not forget;
Their joys, of course, are great; but yet
Parnassus has some nooks right small,
And, sooth, its peaks are not for all;
Though still the happy poets little,
Will not yield up of joy a tittle—

The true spoil'd children of the Muse,
Though call them just what you may choose.
No Tragedy or Epic long
Have they composed ; 'tis but a song,
Into which all their hearts they breathe,
Yet want they not Cytherean wreath.
Want, sooth, they may the dark, obscure—
But will unmeaning words endure ?
Nor when thus doubting of this tone
Do I then stand so quite alone.
For only hear what critics say—
Sainte-Beuve, the greatest of our day.
“ Malherbe, although a poet, wise,
Perhaps this ‘ *although* ’ may surprise ; ”
But then he adds, “ indeed, for me,
Sense and high Poetry agree.
Although in poets less complete
These two you do not always meet.
The Geniuses, at least around,
Have not this strict accordance found,
Nor yet between them shown, in sum,
The perfect equilibrium.”
Then, too, facility is theirs—
So far from comfort and its cares ;
And stop or walk where'er they will,
They have their pastime with them still.
For in the street or fronting flowers—
Yes, every where they find their bowers
On omnibuses e'en they scribble
Their verses, which no critics cribble.

Thus Desbordes-Valmore would by night
Enjoy the Muse's tranquil light ;
When sleepless, visions would prevail,
She warbled as the nightingale;
And oft while strolling on by day
She spread her wings and soar'd away;
Or under gateways, in the rain,
She would compose a dulcet strain;
On the throng'd bridges, pavement, quay,
Whate'er her heart did prompt and say,
She would there catch, pick up, and sing,
Like the soft bird of purple wing
That flies unscared, and never nice,
Intent upon her own device.
No vulgar circumstance you choose
Could check the course of her sweet Muse.
So all these little poets find,
As if by chance, what suits their kind.
They know no pains, or toils, or sorrow;
They fear no evil fame to-morrow;
Their labours are felicity,
Their wanderings free from enmity.
They may not spread grave Milton's wing;
But they can skim round peaks and sing.
Sesquipedalian they may be;
But their sweet mien contenteth me;
If summits grandiose they shun,
Through smiling fields they skip and run,
While e'en the widest, darkest plumes
Will envy oft their mossy rooms.

Witness thus Sannazar the holy,
Who never did renounce them wholly;
Then grave Politian, too, would tell
How Cyparissa's eyes shone well.
Fontanus, who Alphonso taught,
The same slight Muses often sought.
Alciat, terror of the school,
Would, too, suspend his lofty rule
To paint Love's portrait, not touch'd ill
For such a grave Professor still,
Who drew it with scarce any flaw
While teaching well the Roman law.
E'en Stephen Pasquier we could cite,
That learned and accomplish'd wight,
Whose "Contradictions" soundeth still
As if it were a vaudeville.
Then gravest Ronsard, Milton too,
Did sing some light airs to charm you.
Sidonius, whom all Gaul did own,
Would skim o'er slopes like Fénelon.
So that thus on the whole we see
On tiny songs waits Victory.

Then Love, sweet Love, will play his part,
And other little joys impart.
" 'Little?' thou foolish Bard," dost cry?
" His joys are lofty as the sky."
Yet what so little as a curl
Of lips or hair that round them twirl?

Or what so little as the flash
Of eyes that turns all else to trash?
Or the small, nimble foot or finger,
Or songs round which such joys will linger?
Yes, or the hand spread out so small;
For 'tis the hand denoteth all.
It is the hand which causeth love—
And makes men vulgar things above.
In music still it is the hand
Which says you feel and understand.
In poetry it is no less
The hand, observers will confess.
The Greek, too, all this understands,
Who speaks oft of Minerva's hands.
So, when you wish to know men well,
It is upon the hand you dwell.
The little finger, some say, can
Show all the woman or the man.
How short monosyllabic speech,
Which with one "Yes" can rapture reach!
Or what is fainter than the sigh
When Joy itself would rush to die,
Much rather than permit again
The air to catch that plaintive strain?
When lovers meet, forsooth, the joy
Makes all else dwindle to a toy.
Then think how spots are multiplied
As made for lovers side by side.
Just such as the fourth Henri found
Fair Marny's isle—Niortoise ground;

“ Where, sooth, you can so well rejoice,
With the bright loved one of your choice,
Or else lament an absence long
In some heart-rending, plaintive song ”—
Plain words, that any Bard might sing,
And simply utter'd by that king.
In brief, Love's first clear spring is small;
Although in time it floodeth all.
Oh! little joys! around us pour
Ambrosia, as in days of yore,
Till all that's only grand and vast
Will seem a dream for ever past.

Then Conscience, what a little thing!
Yet what exceeds its smile or sting?
Its smile when no dark phantom seems
As flitting before day's sweet dreams
Of some one wrong'd, contented not
With your past acts; this is somewhat,
Though yielding still, of course, the palm
To memory when more than calm;
As when, instead of doubtful things,
Of goodness pure it only sings.
Or what—oh, what its sting exceeds,
Venom'd with sense of crimeful deeds,
Proving, as if before your eyes,
The path on which the bad man flies—
However Cerberus may fawn
On those descending, basely drawn

Towards the dark circle's awful brim,
Where each one's acts encompass him?
For no return when once below—
The three-neck'd dog would furious grow,
Since wicked acts no time can blot,
They never, never are forgot;
While e'en this thought can force a way
To Him who all our debts will pay.
So that this least of hidden mites
When darkest, outshines all delights.

But shall I now transcend my bounds,
And touch my small lyre till it sounds
As if belonging to the sky,
Emitting tones that never die?
A cup of water—how 'tis small!
Yet even that can give you all—
(You catch my meaning) or the mite
Of widows, how gigantic, bright!
What say you, then, of Charity,
The surest, best felicity?
What little things for it suffice?
What smaller than its sly device?
For Peabody cannot surpass
The penny of a feeling lass.

Or would you even higher soar?
Pity the minstrel, I implore,

Who has too small and weak a wing
To mount as you would wish to sing.
Yet this at least he now may say,
The pious spend a happy day.
Adorable and little joys
Belong to those whom Grace employs ;
For, shelter'd from all storms that pass,
They only brilliant drops amass,
And drops that, gather'd so, will shine
With beauty that is quite divine.
What fêtes for them the whole year round ?
When even glows the snow-clad ground ?
Yet to all outward eyes are least
The items of their daily feast.
A sprig of palm, a tiny book,
A holy vase in some sly nook,
A string of humble little grains,
Such is the mite their heart sustains.
So amidst the sharp thorns all spread,
'Tis through the flowers they will tread.
That earthly happiness you seek,
They reach already though so weak.
All good and beauteous things below
For them alone will seem to flow,
Without fatigue, without excess—
While with our deepest joys no less
They have their part, and that not small,
In what will covet, envy all—
In the Poet's balmy light,
In the Artist's matchless night,

And, in what might vaunt a nation,
In men's love and admiration.

Though in angelic heights they soar,
They prize humanity's sweet store;
So that to sing their little joys,
Your minstrel now his harp employs.
Yet even so, perhaps, he'll try;
So list what echoes o'er the sky.

Then, what is smaller than the things
Which Heaven itself ordains and brings
To save the whole of human race
With God for ever face to face?
One thought, one wish, one sigh, one tear—
And lo, to Him are none more dear
Than thou, poor little fluttering soul,
As much beloved as is the whole!
The high and vast must dwindle down
To littleness to find their crown;
No entrance for your greatness there,
Where One is great past all compare.

So now, divine Cecilia, play
In thy own blest, ecstatic way.
It is for thee to sing those little joys,

All springing from the smallest so;
Whence, sooth, Infinity will flow,
Which then to raise us high the lowest thing
employs.

Let others sing the grand and great;
I praise and I admire;
On me let littleness but wait,
Contented with my lyre.

THE MERRY ROVER.

IN the days when Phœbus melts us down and
damsels won't stir out,
What can then, you ask, become of me while
search'd for all about?
From the morn till the night abroad, ne'er found
within your home,
We all wonder where you hide yourself, or where
on earth you roam.
In the spring-tide or the winter's cold, if but a ray
should be,
We do miss you still from every room. Oh, what
becomes of thee?
"In a town, too, like your London," says Hermione,
my friend,

"It must be with some right precious *gueux* that
all your time you spend."

For she thinks that she can see me through, she is
so wondrous clever;

But then, all that I reply to her is simply,
"Well, I never."

For her taunts, like Etna's lava, seem so hot I
needs must use

Brazen sandals, like Empedocles; I'll walk wher-
e'er I choose.

"But supposing," add I, "that you trace my steps
all here and there,

I will heed you not, but let you still to your own
haunts repair;

Yet e'en there, perhaps, you'll hear a voice that
echoes what I say,

That no friendship can suffice our hearts if nothing
else will stay.

You will think it is enough, of course; but look
you all around,

And say where, oh! where can a mere friend
sufficing thus be found?

For how many would resign their all if only they
could find

Some one to speak encouragement quite at leisure
in his mind

With a sympathizing face; but know, these wishes
are in vain;

For of all these good, wise friends I think
you'd soon have to complain.

In your circles quite respectable, oft Friendship
may be vaunted ;
But in point of fact I think you'll find that it is
never wanted.
'Tis a thing too simple, plain, by half, too classical
to last,
Far too redolent of times heroic—thing quite of
the past.
One with business is so occupied ; another works
for fame ;
E'en another for his soul ; but you are left alone
the same ;
So their virtue, with its ceaseless duties, is the
cause why they
The whole long year round have not three words
to such as you to say.
If the murmurs of despondent men were told you
at their ends,
You'd hear bitter sighs and just reproaches of
their so-call'd friends ;
And yet, sooth, but idle would they be ; for we
are all alike ;
So just suffer me to take the paths that may my
fancy strike.
'Tis your *gueux*, perhaps, who are less press'd,
less occupied with self,
Less devoted, after all your scorn, to scraping up
their pelf.
It was said of old in Grecian verse that Love
would never take

Once his way on proud Ambition's road, and for
Ambition's sake.

Since the twain can scarcely ever go together or
agree,

So he still will follow other paths, as now per-
chance you see;

Although, mind, I do not say 'tis Love that leads
me far from you;

For I only frame an answer thus, and such, I
think, will do.

But to vagabonds like me, of course, your name
"gueux" has a charm—

A fine appropriateness, too, that will all my wrath
disarm.

For e'en Fortune too is vagabond, a wanderer like
me;

But still Love, as old Menander says, the best of
guides can be.

And, sooth, every man whom it inspires can easily
be led,

And is naturally docile too, as that old poet
said.

So to think that I a lover am, is but a compli-
ment;

Then I'll leave you to that gentle thought, how-
ever I am bent.

"Is it pride," say some, "misanthropy, that makes
you fly the throng

Of the consequential, high-named folk to which
you might belong?"

Oh! no; folly, say I, that would be, and simply
want of sense,
But their presence is a gain for me with which
I can dispense,
While I carefully would hide the thoughts that
make me shun them so,
That those who of me would 'vantage take should
not my reason know.
Sooth, it often happens men are spoil'd by having
known the best;
It will seem to them quite *infra dig.* to meet or
greet the rest.
And your low-bred people I can't bear, although
"ten thousand" strong,
Fine old names possess'd with impudence make all
things seem so wrong.
But, ye stayers in the house, attend, you shall be
answer'd soon;
And the telling you half what I do is for myself
a boon;
For the pleasures that are never told seem selfish,
cold, and dry;
So now list a merry harper's song, that Minstrel
gay am I.
Though not all, forsooth, I'll tell you, since the
whole is my concern;
Enough, enough for you 'twill be when my free-
dom you will learn.
For the Riddlemy of vagabonds, and all their Rid-
dlemies,

On you never could confer a grace, as any day one
sees.

But to wander thus, a vagabond, while yet an
amateur,

Is to spend a day poetical, much like a trou-
badour;

Though the castles that he haunts just now are
only in the air,

Yet still Fancy's bright, undoubted facts, will all
the while be there.

I grant that my real fairy bowers on certain days
are closed,

And that then in sober truth am I to every chance
exposed;

Yet even then a sweet wild Muse can, still
smiling, lead me on,

And cheer me with the thought how soon the
loneliest day is gone.

Still Apollo, named Agyieus, is guardian of the
streets,


And eke roads, for one like me who strays, while
loving all he meets;

Though at times his myrtle sandals wearing,
Hermes-like, to hide

All his footsteps, which the twigs efface as on he
wanders wide;


For, while aye like Hermes, too, he has upon his
heels two wings,

He knows well of what small trifles oft the false,
haughty world sings.



So in gardens or the parks I stray, or through
suburban fields,
That I there may see what bench, or grove, or
slope, or hedge-row yields.
To the Thames alone, though dear to me, I seldom
roam of late;
For why, all my Naiads, Dryads grown, now dread
a watery fate.
And yet sometimes metamorphosed so, they'll glide
along the brink;
For when once afloat, I know it well, they never
fear to sink.
In the London season, above all, I fly th' insipid
throng,
To have laughter with the boys that play, and
hear the thrush's song.
It is then that my Arcadia proves what elsewhere
many seek—
A true country, as the French would say, of
opéra comique.
When the weather calls us all to fly abroad with
liberty,
Then I must be off, indeed I must, and yield
obedience free.
For aye Spring-love—that, yes, that's my name,
like him of old, you know;
I can no great reason offer you, but that it must
be so.
So you see my name, like Virgil's too, may from
the stars be taken—

The bright Pleiades or Vergiliæ, when buds do
first awaken;
“ The sweet influences of the Pleiades ” do such
raptures bring,
That there’s no detaining me at home, when shine
the stars of spring.
When the bright Midsummer’s-day is come, my
roof must be the sky;
When the winter would imprison me, some short
escape I try.
For the frosts and awful snows that deck his brow
no chill impart
To all those who, as in sunny days, have still a
merry heart.
Like your ancient jolly beggar, so I wander the
year round ;
And whene’er the tide of life will flow near seated
I am found.
Oft your stark and rampant couchant beggar
sighs—of that I’m sure;
But not so, believe me, does your jolly thoughtful
amateur;
Or if, indeed, he sometimes sighs, it is but to pity
others,
Young Master Few-clothes smiling still, or poor
broken-hearted mothers.
E’en for current, errant, downright beggars,
Christian, above all,
I might urge they were quite harmless men, what-
ever them you call.



On the wayside worthy Oldrent found a bard, like
me, decay'd,
Who could speak and write as well, although his
poems never paid.
No high Court or City Poet could write more, the
beggars said,
Than this poor hedge-Musemonger, who on the
grass must lay his head.
Then what think you of the Pilgrims too, who
thus alone would stray,
In the tales of the romantic age? For all men
was this way.
Or would you to the Grecians fly, and now list
their sages deep?
You must walk abroad by day and night, though
'neath the stars you sleep.
As for me, by Nature's instinct led, no motive I
can claim;
But that home-keeping life for me must still prove
too stale and tame.
In the house I read no covenant to whistle or to
sing;
No; nor right hearty, merry, find I those who
close fast their wing.
For a spring or summer trick of youth, for autumn
just as well,
Or for a winter's progress short, e'en much good I
have to tell.
For to ramble forth you know not where, and
mark whate'er you see,

May seem madness in your narrow sight, though
bliss it is to me.

Sooth, the fruits in season I prefer, are those of
rich content,

Far more sweet than all the made-up dross of out-
ward compliment.

When the birds begin to sing upon the trees so
green and tall,

Oh! well you know my suit—my suit—for, oh!
then I hear my call.

Then the gadding humour must have vent by
changing place and air;

Though to some poor wandering vagabond myself
you will compare.

'Tis the air, as our own Ruskin shows, that
cleareth best the brain,

So Athena is a goddess bright of whom I don't
complain.

It is she who constitutes the charm of every field
and bower,

For 'tis health she brings, and purity, and life,
and joy, and power.

Yes; she sheds ambrosial brightness o'er the faces
that we meet,

As Penelope experienced well when her she came
to greet.

And Achilles, weak, dejected too, felt no less her
great spell—

The whole Greek army, even so, at her sweet
breath grew well.

The blue-eyed goddess also flew to give Menelaus aid,

When, left without strength, of Hector bold he seem'd somewhat afraid.

I grow e'en heroic, like Achilles when she raised his hair,

All restored and gladden'd when I feel the fresh and playful air.

Still I stroll not always lonely on, as you, perchance, suppose,

But often walk I with a friend that, of course, no grandee knows.

Then the changes of the atmosphere bring such delight to me,

That some true enchantment seems to flow from every thing I see;

As on Hampstead Hill in summer-time we watch the distant rain,

When old Harrow seems to hail the gift to all the purple plain;

Or when, passing near the woods at eve, we hear the linnet's song,

We feel then as if, 'midst hills and dales, does nothing e'er go wrong;

Or when from steep Highgate we would stray across the slopes so green,

To gay Hampstead and its Vale of Health, where you I trust have been.

Then the woods of Mansfield's honoured name attract us on to rove,

While still looking westward on to lawns that
line the evening grove ;
Or when stretch'd upon the Eel-pie Isle, as when
I was a boy,
With some loved one that will chat with me, I
yield to none in joy.
Yet how strange it is, the while to know that all
these sites so fair
Will draw half their great charm from the thought
of things recall'd that were ?
The green, sloping meads, that rushy bank, that
distant, purple plain,
Revive impressions of our youth, which then all
come back again.
So thus mystic is the source of joy when slight
and tender, small ;
For we know not how it flows to us, though we
possess it all—
E'en the horse which when a youth I rode, the
inn where I would stay,
The sweet incidents of former life, the friends not
pass'd away.
Oh, come, join me with a merry heart ; vagaries
are for me,
Aye, the best of all the sweet delights that any
day I see.
Shall we make a fling to Holloway, or to the
Bishop's Road ?
Or to Richmond, or to Teddington, to which I
often strode ?

Or to Highgate, Hampstead, shall I go? or to the
Hyde beyond?
Or to Beulah Spa, or Rosherville, of all of which
we're fond?
To the Park of Finsbury so fair? or farther shall
we walk;
Where, to our own and dog's surprise, some tall
ostrich gaunt will stalk?
To haunt classic scenes I cannot say has always
been my wont,
But a road I sometimes take recalls the Caledonian
hunt.
Or, think you, will it now suffice to climb up fair
Primrose Hill?
Yea, farther, to pass hedge and ditch, and then
quaff the crystal rill?
Through the briars and the mire at times to feel
our liberty,
It ne'er skills where be the rendezvous; each
yields felicity.
With such hoofing it we may be sore, feel feeble
too, towards dusk;
Our light fare may even oft recall the Prodigal's
dry husk.
Then, perhaps, like Medes of old, I walk as if the
end I'd greet;
For dismounted, as you know, they found too
tender were their feet.
Though some charm, I grant, may still belong to
things that cause you pain,

Still, you never care for toiling so, you would start fresh again.

What is all this pain and toil to you, who have long while to rest?

Of course you will oft be wearied thus, and seldom fare the best.

Pshaw! that skills not much; what draws you on is still the couch or seat;

'Tis the air or 'tis the smile and chat of those that there you meet.

Why, your gallants oft love food that's coarse; 'tis Broome that says it too;

Then why should dull epicures provide, or think, make vows for you?

There are many who at all times feel what Véron did confess,

When your luxuries and comforts too to satiate them would press—

The sly want, the greatest want of all that visits gorged, high stations—

We should own it, yes, quite frankly thus, the want of some privations.

Now such wandering on as I propose is sure to yield at last

If not hardships yet privations great, and e'en at times a fast.

For Antiphanes of ancient times could never say of me,

That quite uninvited, like a fly, I'd come to dine with thee.

So that, really, howe'er you mock, there's always
much to praise
In a day devoted to the air when one e'en lonely
strays.
Oh! such solitude, I grant, has oft a sadness of
its own;
But experience it can aye supply by which so
much is known.
'Tis its sadness that can teach us best another day
to tell
What may please a mirthful, faithful friend, where
all around is well.
There are days, 'tis true, not over gay, when me
the wolf might eat,
Left thus all alone to wander on and pass from
seat to seat;
But if the bright sun will only shine, and skies be
blue and fair,
The young trees will my companions be, my
banquet is the air;
As when I sit beside the lake in the Park of
Finsbury,
And pale Alexandra's lofty dome, with Highgate
woods I see,
All embalm'd from yesterday's delight, when not
alone I stroll'd,
Which proves joy for long succeeding days, as
sages said of old,
When alluding to that supper prized, all free from
care and sorrow,

'That proved still so pleasant when 'twas past and
thought of on the morrow.
Midst privations, I shall still have had what com-
pensates for all,
To see no dull, proud monotony which some high
manners call.
And what are these inconveniences but warfare at
the most?
Of all of which with true wit and mirth you long
may fairly boast.
The mere fortuitous green sod could e'en make
the Poet dote,
Where you can have sweet operas from the lark
or thrush's throat;
Although, sooth, if both my feet should be done
up at evening hour,
Just you trust me now the vagabond, it is not I
look sour.
I will put upon the whole a face the best for all
your shout,
And ere I give in, for all your jests, will pant my
last gasp out.
Oh! what bird upon the greenwood-tree has free-
dom more than I?
So then wonder not if I wing off and leave you on
the sly.
While great common rich proprietors have acres
here and there,
My estate is all the land I see, spread round me
every where.

For now what can others say of theirs that will
not suit my rhyme,
When all that I boast of is but this, I use it for a
time?
With no tyrant rival landlord, like the old Chief-
Justice Clack,
To warn me off with some gruff harsh words, and
bid me hasten back,
As in the distant country-parts, where low farmers
set at you
A vile *curat lex* to hunt you still, and, sooth, to
make you rue.
My fine freehold reaches far and wide; in short,
whate'er I see,
In or near our sweet old London town belongs of
right to me.
Now when Diana's darling thus, and each season's
heir is gone,
I might reckon you his pleasures up, and state
them one by one;
But that then my song would tedious prove, these
are so many, sooth,
And all in accordance with the taste of manhood,
age, and youth.
Only think how many pleasant things as I will jot
them down,
Can occur each day while roaming thus through
suburbs and the town.
You throw half-pence right and left to all who
inwardly will bless

Him who detects their secret wants, and while
giving ne'er has less.

Then the torn old garment and the rags do but
the better show

The delicately skinn'd and limb'd who may all be
steep'd in woe ;

And the bravery of gallant minds and dauntless
spirit too,

Will permit a course of joining throngs, whatever
pranks they do,

To the hill-top of the honest sport, or to the vale
profound—

Where, midst all the din of London life, true
poetry is found.

For no place will prove too public then for our
fine recreation,

Since we have it all within ourselves wherever be
our station.

Then at times each may be pensive grown, like
Catinat in France,

Call'd by his soldiers "Father Thought," whom
all Nature did entrance

As he wander'd by the tranquil shore of Enghien's
placid lake,

Still so loved by poets who will roam; and thither,
for his sake,

Recalling him, so humble, just, whom no breath
did ever blame,

While they point at his pale poplars tall, and aye
repeat his name,
Who did live—his epitaph declared—as Christian
heroes ought,
As some others too in ancient times, who courted
quiet thought ;
For our Roamer, though so worthless, sooth, will
cherish this one link
That can bind him to the good as thus he loves to
stray and think.
'Tis merrier, I freely own, when two will thus
walk or sit,
But we aye have unseen company when silent is
our wit.
So think not that we then stray alone through one
great city vast ;
For 'tis three great Londons that we haunt—the
Present, Former, Past.
'Tis the Present, as in what we see, the high and
low all one ;
'Tis the Former, of Saint Edward's faith, in ages
that are gone.
Then the London of the dead we find upon the
Harrow Road,
At our Kensal Green, or any where that shows
their green abode.
With the three, howe'er you banter me, I saunter
forth and walk ;
I will listen, watch, mark down, and scan, and
even chat and talk.

Ah! the Present pleases well, I know; it is so kind and free!

Though how shall I here describe each thing that teaches, pleases me?

Of the London Parliamentary, aristocratic too,
Or the busy with commercial ways, a Bard has less to do.

But if with artist's eye endow'd, or a heart to feel a song,

Then the sweetest human graces will before him pass along.

Oh! call Faed to hasten hither now with pencil and with colours,

All the little virtues to portray that grow in London bowers.

But to cull these florets, even one, or touch them, I'm afraid,

Though no warning e'er should meet my eye, they are so finely made;

Yes, so delicate, so soft their bloom, that at my grasp they die,

So mystic proves the great work divine submitted to our eye.

You will talk of limbs of Grecian mould, and all that, sooth, is well;

But why not mark, too, the inward thought to point it out and tell?

See the showman in the street who stands, the young ones all around;

The little still in the foremost ranks, by big boy's bounty found;

For the tall will yield spontaneously that place,
and stand behind ;

In each house, or in the busy streets, you thus
trace lines of mind.

The true lines of beauty, sooth, these are, and
proofs of God's great skill

In the great and little world of mind while fashion-
ing the will.

Then we haunt Saint Edward's London still each
day that we pass by

The small chapel where his faith is taught, though
towers are not high ;

While e'en solemn roofs, as Westminster's can yet
no more attest

Than that what now proclaims the small is the
wisest, truest, best.

Then I summon up old history here, to see the
workman's hand

Gently kiss'd by Saints we read about, to make us
understand,

That nothing now merits more respect 'midst all
the things we see,

Than the bright, contented, honest face of labour-
ing Poverty.

Let your grim and pamper'd Plutus roll along,
disdaining now ;

'Tis to sons and daughters of life's toil interiorly
we bow.

In the beauties of the human mind, besides, you
always see

Still the graces of the old and tried pure Catholicity.

But there still does aye remain a town, the London
of the dead,

And of that now what can I perceive? of that
what can be said?

Well, I grant that the invisible seems quite to pass
away

The same instant that the fondest loved to Erebus
will stray.

Yes; the moment that each one will die, a sacred,
awful gloom

Will seem all his image compassing, e'en blotting
out the tomb.

Just as Cæsar, dead as long ago, the last flown
will appear;

It seems e'en as if in life's details to us they ne'er
were near.

Who can think that gloves or socks they wore, or
neck-ties just as bright

As the fair youths on Sundays still, that all
saunter in your sight?

Who can think that these, all silent now, who
nought can imitate,

Had each lately such a sweet, clear voice, to call
his smiling mate—

That these same were they who, whistling, ran
with baskets at their side,



While still counterfeiting Echo's voice through
all the suburbs wide?

Alas! in the land that's laughterless how silent
are they all!

Thus transferr'd by Hades driving men obedient
to his call.

Like a laundress o'er her tub will Death all lives
thrown in confound;

The latest with the longest strewn will be there
commingled found.

For the topmost and the lowest will he dash from
side to side,

To and fro, and up and down, as if with both his
arms spread wide.

He so delves and spreads, so turns, returns, and
makes one mess of all.

Individualities seem lost, the greatest and the
small—

A uniform heap of things, but one file of nameless
muck,

Still sent speeding on the hollow way upon a
ghastly truck,

Merely shadowy, phantasmal now for all its
loudest boast,

Each wild thing, you know not what it is, grows
tissueless, a ghost.

Alexander, Cæsar, all the throng whose glories
have been said,

Will seem not farther off removed than the boys
or maids just dead—

No, not lower in the seething pile; one cloud to
cover all!

For, in homely language, that is just what simply
death we call.

But, O friend, for us should still exist the town
we do not see;

Since the London of the dead is here, quite near
in secrecy:

In the mind's eye it will seem to play its once
accustom'd part—

Still to teach and guide, and, what is more, to
mould and warm our heart.

Oh! the riches of the silent town are not those of
the vain—

Not echoless its shores for us; but harmonious is
its strain.

For true goodness is the treasure there, as if with
Faith alone

The instruction is for all still here, the music is
its own.

So then even, when without my friend I'll haunt
the gardens fair,

The streets, fields, and hills, for three grand Lon-
dons will be always there.

Oh! yes, still abroad I'll wander on, and when my
spirits sink,

I can chat with friendly strangers round, or sit
alone and think.

So your vagabond, for all his suit, to join the
birds and fly,

May be learning just from these three towns both
how to live and die.

THE PRAISE OF NOT KNOWING.

OH! there are traitors in the mind
That try a masquerading game,
To evil and to good as blind,
Dispensing falsely praise and blame.
Let me of one defamed now sing,
And from her fair, sweet face, a false mask fling.

Yet oft these players are not all
Deceiving when they dress thoughts so;
It is that by one name they call
Two things they ought distinct to show.
For twofold all that we survey
Will ever prove in life where'er we stray.

Two faces all things human show,
Like those Silenuses of old
Which Alcibiades did know,
And which such beauty did enfold;
For what you see and take for death,
May be true life, and of that life the breath;


Oh, here how right is often wrong!
The fair seems hideous to our eye,

True wisdom but an idle song,
And ignorance true knowledge high.
Silenus open ; and you see
How all is changed, how vast the prodigy.

There is a Liberty most just.
A Liberty that suits but fools,
Restraint will gratify the first ;
Mere licence gives the latter rules,
And, tried in geometric scales,
Proportionate to folly that prevails.

There is a Folly reckless, vile,
A Folly innocent and good—
An Ignorance that will beguile,
An Ignorance of virtue food.
Brand deep the evil as is due ;
But let the good come smiling to our view.

No scanty limits are, 'tis true, assign'd
To facts that can transport the human mind.
In countless forms they will surround us ever ;
To know them is an innocent endeavour.
What sleeps in books, in Nature's wondrous store,
Yields but a minimum to each, no more.
Hereafter knowledge, all on one vast page,
We may possess, and so our thirst assuage.
But here, while viewing mere parts in turns, slow,
Love all we can, but never all thus know.



The maid I sing of, conscious of our state,
Will seek not knowledge thus to antedate,
Which often only serves to interfere
With our true pleasures and our duties here.
She grants, indeed, there is a transport high
When things unknown before we can descry.
But if we knew the universe in whole,
She far more loves one virtue of the soul.
One gracious thought, one smile without a boast,
Exceeds all knowledge when we know the most.
That gracious thought, that smile may often be
Where knowing not yields wise simplicity.

Oh ! yes, there is an Ignorance
Most sweet and precious to the wise,
Aye fraught with sacred innocence,
That higher than much wisdom flies ;
Yet this is still the sweet, soft maid,
So oft misnamed, and left in scornèd shade.

'Tis she who truly sheds a charm
On common life and oft on love—
A wildness that does never harm,
But o'er all interest floats above ;
'Tis she who in the deepest schools
Wards off what Wisdom, vain and proud, befools.

'Tis she who soars with men divine,
That aids, directs their upward way
Towards heights where truths celestial shine,
Through clouds that shroud our mortal day.

'Tis she who e'en on earth can find
The vision beatific in her mind.

Descend, O maid, and show us first
How thou dost sweeten human woes
By teaching us to quench our thirst
Where limpid water flows,
Streams that can refresh our life,
Without rivals, without strife.
Let the soft zephyrs blow,
Let the fair flowers grow;
Let all hearts surely know
That thou thyself art found to be
From what does trouble life for ever free.

See how she comes, so soft and fair,
With such a sweet and gentle air!
As when the sun pours down his rays,
And casts such sheen through bowery ways,
Or just as when, the winter o'er,
The spring enamels earth's green floor,
Reviving Nature changes all,
And to enjoyment sings her call,
So this pure maid need but be seen,
And all is done for us, I ween.
Smile-loving, and quick-winking too,
And care-dissolving, ever true;
Well-garlanded, like Aphrodite,
Sweet Ignorance will greet your sight.

Her personality is writ
Upon her front, as, sooth, is fit.
If any would Minerva see
In her, she says, "You err in me."
No paint upon her visage shows,
She tells at once the whole she knows.
She never uses a disguise—
You see her mind within her eyes.
And, from the first, for her poor part,
She often tells what's in her heart.
She has the glad nymph Youth for mother,
And so her thoughts she will not smother.
She cites old Sophocles, if you
Would sternly take another view;
For he says, Knowledge proud must go
If you would have life sweetly flow.
Than childhood or than youth, just say,
What has a more unrivall'd sway?
How loved, caress'd, extoll'd, admired,
Are both, of whom no one is tired!
What sympathies do they create!
A true enchantment is their state.
And why? Because this maid so wise
To be their playmate ever tries.
Her aureole of ignorance
Can thus all human hearts entrance.
Now banish her, and bid them speed
To knowledge of which they have need.
Their beauty fades; their hearts decay;
You wish that they were far away.

Their elegance, their truth, their grace,
Are gone ; and what now takes their place ?
The world's ways and Convention's law—
From knowledge all these pests they draw.
A premature old age comes on,
When healthy Ignorance is gone.
They've fed on the forbidden tree ;
They're spoilt and lost for you and me.
Fond Psyché, or the Soul in Greek,
Was also that poor moth so weak
Who seeks the flame and to it flies,
And in its light attractive dies,
To typify that knowledge proud
Which kills the soul and proves its shroud.
Alas ! how many find their death
In trusting some vain mortal's breath !
Though even then there is a cure,
Of which the great success is sure—
By leading them to happy isles
Where Wisdom false no more beguiles
To Lethe's source, where they forget,
And may once more be happy yet.
O haste to these ethereal plains
Where Ignorance like this remains.
Then let us welcome her again,
And hear no more the Muse complain.
Hark how her gentle voice does sound
Like distant music o'er the ground,
While telling us to fling away
All vain affection for display,

That passion which renders so often our life
Distracted with needless researches and strife,
Till in the end we ever find
The smiles are fled,
The joy is dead,
And that the wisest were the kind.
Such Ignorance is not the foe of truth ;
It is the friend of scientific youth,
Preventing it from forfeiting at least
The social pleasures of life's daily feast.
Parade of knowledge is at best
What knowledge proves—a foe to rest ;
While those who own their knowing not
Will seldom any surface blot
To ruin conversation's gentle flow,
When not most prized is he who most does know.

Cheerfulness is what we seek,
Condescending to the weak.
Pride we wish not to content,
On far other interests bent.
And contradictions here no welcome find ;
Till knowledge hides, preferring to be kind.

Morosophists who love to boast
Are those of course who scorn the most
This holy maid. But then compare ;
Does not their very visage scare ?
Love you, indeed, their style, their cloth,
Bedew'd with the grammarian's wrath,

Their loud invectives, jealousies,
With which, sooth, nothing ever vies ?
And after all, why seek to know
Who bore Anchises long ago ?
Their life appears a torture long,
Their sweetest hope to find out wrong.
They add, they change, retrench, replace,
Forge and reforge, write out, efface ;
They lose their health, their sight, their life.
Philetas died of this same strife ;
“ On arguments he spent his breath ;
And thoughts by night have caused his death.”
Astydamas, in ancient days,
Like them, could only live on praise ;
And so to praise themselves, their class,
Archilochus they will surpass,
Depreciating all other men
That they may shine above them then.
To prove of new things the inventor,
Each will outcry the throat of Stentor ;
And, if their glory you deny,
They rage, malign—they sicken, die.

Theologastres then will know
More than all mortals here below.
Their subtile subtleties are such
They think they never spin too much.
Magistral definitions then
They use to plague all other men.

Conclusions, corollaries small,
With propositions that they call
Implicit, explicit, create
A system which they guard with hate.
At their *distinguo* you must yield ;
Their *non tenetur* is a shield
That common sense can never pierce
While they look confident and fierce,
With eyes of lynx to plunge a dart
That, baffled, falls before your heart.
But look we back on Sophists old,
The founders of our present fold.
They'll write on rats, and frogs, and flies—
They say the vulgar only lies ;
A quartain fever they will praise,
Defend Busiris and his ways,
Injustice, baldness, they'll defend ;
They'll vaunt things hideous without end ;
Extol they will their "golden ass,"
But "knowing-not" must never pass.
Their pompous gravities deny
What the heart tells, the mind, the eye ;
And our poor maid they will defame,
For her reserving all their blame.
Though they who thus against her rail
In what they value most, most fail.
Euripides them well portray'd
When with two tongues he show'd them made—
The one for circumstances so,
And one for what they think they know.

'Tis they who can change black to white,
The right to wrong, and wrong to right.
Their deity is Knowledge thus ;
But then some sense remains with us.
That goddess who comes crown'd so fine
Not always is quite genuine ;
While the poor mock'd one they revile
And clothe with shame, has, sooth, no guile.
If this fair maid they will disguise,
The other's robe need not surprise.
But their lent garments, foul or fair,
Is that for which we need not care.
No ; for most eyes can pierce them through,
And what they cover have in view.
Their pompous Knowledge they make glitter ;
For honours they think nothing fitter ;
They show her in a splendid dress ;
I don't deny her cleverness.
But then, to worship her, like you,
Is what, trust me, we'll never do.
She has one fault you cannot hide,
'Tis real ignorance with pride.
And then a host of hideous traits
Disgusts all those who see her ways.
Your knowing men, like Mazarine,
Thus always have suspicious been.
He is well painted by De Retz,
Who all his other faults forgets,
But that one vice on which he dwells,
And for our own instruction tells.

And it is well that fault to mention ;
For he opines a bad intention
Still prompted all who to him spoke,
Whether in earnest or in joke.
But our poor maid distrusteth not ;
Is that, pray, why you like her not ?
She still supposes what is best ;
Is that what you the most detest ?
The wish to know all fills men's life
With toil that oft proves fruitless strife.
They think whatever art may do,
Cannot be natural or true.
Their mind involves a chaos vast
Of sly intentions to the last,
Intrigues inexplicable, deep,
Which never for a moment sleep—
Not alone distinct, but e'en
Opposed, though much is known I ween.
Our gentle but neglected maid,
Through no such depths has e'er to wade ;
She floats where the bright stream will flow,
And leaves the mud and shades below.

Yet is she not without respect
For Science and his great effect.
Ah ! it is Science that should love
To see how she will gaze above,
So wondering to hear him talk
Of themes far, far beyond her walk.

Staring at him with all her eyes—
A listener whom he should prize,
Though asking questions too, I wot,
And questions he can answer not.
'Tis one of her chief pleasures small
To hear, accept, admire all ;
Of what is most herself beyond
She often even grows most fond.
Science will other science call
To mortal combat, troubling all.
Him for high quarrels he will meet ;
But she sits smiling at his feet,
Admiring his strange visions high,
To think on them and not deny ;
While, like Philenis, she will say
That to know nothing is her way.

But now methinks I see this damsel smile ;
For, sooth, of Love she needs must sing awhile.
And here she frankly owns that "*knowing-not*"
Proves oft to Lovers a most happy lot.
So 'tis not the abuse of knowledge she
Will now decline ; she wishes to be free
From knowing certain points, in whole or part,
On which pure ignorance contents her heart.
To say that knowing not in Love is all,
Would be a paradox, and that not small.
The alpha and omega it may be
In common friendship, as we daily see ;

But that in Love, the tenderest and fond
To think 'tis useful is not far beyond
Truth's strictest limits ever to proceed;
For even there some ignorance we need.
No horn'd soritès here would I employ,
No captious argument that would annoy.
The dialectic jongleries of some
Would lead to ends to which I never come.
Although, perhaps, in sad reality
With all life's sternest facts, they come to thee,
As Guttenguen complains in that sweet song
Attesting how true Love has done him wrong.
" We pass through life as strangers to its bliss,
Two—one in heart,
Though all our union merely ends in this,
Still two, apart."
But then I think, and must right freely say,
That even here not-knowing has to play
A gracious, manly, noble, faithful part,
Howe'er we love a true and constant heart.
In love one must be deaf, and often blind,
Or what we sigh for we shall hardly find.
And Nature means that we should never see
Or hear what with true love would not agree.
Perfection absolute is not here found—
Dispense with it must every lover sound.
He knows not what he feels, and sees, and hears,
And so 'tis Ignorance that each endears.
But then, 'tis Ignorance that knoweth more
Than keen, sly Arguses with all their store

Of accusations, jealousies, complaints ;
Whose lynx eyes scan and measure all the taints
To blight Imagination with the real,
And close the heart against the bright ideal,
Which, after all, approaches to the true
Far more than if the rest they fully knew.
But "knowing-not" has yet two other parts
To play in these grave matters of our hearts.

Some strangers' faces that you see
Are such that you would ever be,
Where their great charm unknown is found.
'Tis "knowing-not" that spreads around
The magic web of that sweet spell
In which you for an instant dwell.
Once all about them come to know,
And they would common mortals grow.
Esteem, respect, and love might stay,
But all the rest would fade away—
That rest ! mysterious and unknown,
Which always knowledge will disown,
Partaking of a vision's might
To blot out all that stays in sight.
One moment grasp it, if you dare—
It dies. Its life must be elsewhere,
In that strange, silent, unknown land,
Of which we nought yet understand.

But this is, sooth, a case extreme;
Let's study facts, and not a dream;
For through degrees we still advance
While estimating Ignorance—
Meaning by that the state of mind
When what you wish you do not find.

Say, whither will true Love be sped?
Not to a cramm'd and aching head,
As to his dearest prize;
'Tis to the sweet, capacious breast;
'Tis there that he would take his rest;
'Tis thither that he flies.

O yes; what he will most require,
Is not the science you admire,
The knowledge manifold—
It is a heart that only knows
How Love can cure all human woes,
While Knowledge feels so cold!

Good sense is all he asks from you,
Clear goodness and affection true;
But as for all the rest—
A stuff'd encyclopædian mind
Him fast to you will never bind;
Its vaunts he will detest.

Nor is this all that now will sing the maid;
She warbles notes that court another shade.

For Love, she says, mysteriously will fly
To those who have no language but the eye,
Resolved to hide in silence all the rest,
Content with proving that they still are best.

Oh, ask you whence the bird has flown
That is to you familiar grown,
That so delights your ear,
As, perching near you on some spray
She sings for you thus every day,
And never seems to fear?

Oh, would her song delight you more
If you did clearly know before
The cage from which she flew?
Say rather, 'lighting from the sky,
Does she not charm still more your eye
Than if her home you knew?

Ah, is it not enough to know,
When thus you hear her warbling flow,
As if on Love to call,
That she comes there from Him who made
That green-wood tree, that fragrant shade,
The Maker of us all?

By the verdant slopes that wind
Where the limpid stream you find,
In the hawthorn grove,

Where some bridge supplies a way
To bright streets where oft will stray
One with whom you'd rove—

See who now comes as through a summer cloud,
Though whence your total ignorance does shroud.
She comes; you are contented
To feed your heart and eyes;
She never has consented
To tell you whence she flies.

Yet knowledge could not
Enchant more your lot;
More truly it only would quell
The sweet bliss that pervades
These green hawthorn shades,
If all that she knows you could tell.

Some smallest items will such Lovers know—
Bright drops, as when the summer rain will
flow,
And you would see them sparkle in your hand;
For prized sounds fall from conversation bland.
Thus words, perhaps, have dropp'd, but such as
they
Still find that no great secrets will convey.
But hear they will some dear and homely sound;
And so a prenom oft is quickly found,
Familiar as the lark's fresh matin song,
To which Elysian sweetness will belong,


As to themselves, they breathe it when alone,
And find it strung to music's softest tone.
On that one word, no doubt, they set great
store;

But there their knowledge ends ; it is no more.
Perchance they know that Lizzie is her name,
But never how, or why, or whence she came—
What thought first taught her breast to fly the
throng,

To prove that goodness should to her belong.
They see she cometh like the evening star,
That peeps amidst the gold and purple bar
Of clouds whose colours brighten all the West,
But darkness hides and veils for them the rest.

Yet while thus knowing-not, their love
Soars more the sordid earth above;
As when of brilliant forms they dream
Fann'd with whose wings the zephyrs seem.
So this bright stranger seems to own
Perfection—simply as unknown ;
A mind diaphanous is hers ;
But to tell secrets she demurs.
The lady of their thoughts is she,
Though circled with a mystery.

'Twas so of old, when, in his swan-led boat,
At Cleves the damsel saw her lover float.
For many years they lived in peace and joy,
Till knowing-not that lady did annoy.



She needs must hear him tell
Where elsewhere he did dwell,
Though still warn'd not to pry
Into his secret sly,
Lest, when 'twas known,
She, left alone,
Would live and moan,
While he would fly,
For ever, ever, from her eye.
But still she would know all,
Whatever might befall.
She ask'd. Then no more
Did he tread her loved floor.

Lo! swift in the swan-boat he speeds down the
Rhine;

The light in that castle no longer does shine.
Yes; all was lost when she did seek to know,
And scorn the ignorance whence bliss did flow.

To "know-not" oft is best,
When we in love would rest.

Love hates impatient spirits that would all things
know.

Nor is this all, ye holy saints
Who will distrust my lyre;
'Tis the same artist still who paints
Within the holy Quire
Those unknown to you by name,
Those that whence you know not came.
How to you they are dear!
When they kneel by you near!

How you think they excel
All the best you know well !
'Tis ignorance, you needs must own,
That makes you love them more because unknown.
Let then the deep majestic organs sound ;
Uranian Love to the unknown is bound.

But, as foreseen, this maid will show us now
That Wisdom to herself will duly bow.
So then prepare; 'tis Gravity we meet ;
He too will own that Ignorance is sweet.

For " knowing-not " does not alarm
The deepest schools, or yet disarm.
This maiden is not only kind ;
She is the guardian of our mind ;
And so, when for herself she pleads,
She best supplies the wise man's needs,
Who has a certain temperance
Of reason that will ne'er advance
Beyond the limits and the bounds
Of all things that it ever sounds.

Where Knowledge dwells, you soon find Abelard,
Who thought no questions for his mind too hard ;
Yet even he at last was forced to fly
To Ignorance, that claim'd the victory.
Later one hundred years Accurso wrote
On a Justinian law this little note—
" Here Peter Abelard, whom all men know,
Own'd ignorance by saying, *Nescio*."

A word familiar to the ancient schools,
Which even became formulized in rules ;
As when our Poet makes his wise man say,
What is as just now at the present day,
“ Of what I know not howe’er much I try,
Do let me own that ignorant am I.”
Then list the knowing, sharp, and deep Montaigne
Of wronging holy Ignorance complain.
“ Oh !” saith he, “ what a soft and wholesome
pillow,
Sweet as if angel’s wings did round it winnow,
Is Ignorance in heads well made and free
From fond and witless curiosity !”
“ Such Ignorance is sister,” says a sage,
“ Of Innocence, which does man’s thirst assuage.”
But all the wisest men in ages past
Of Greece and Rome did come to this at last.
“ For Ignorance,” said they, “ of Truth is mother ;”
And still with knowledge Science knows no other.

Now let us haunt the new Academy,
And what a contrast are we sure to see
O’er all its wind-blown shore ?
For it is here that Hermes seems to reign,
Though of clouds elsewhere men alone complain.
The power of concealment and of theft
Is that of which no sophist is bereft.
Each has a function most ignoble here,
Of causing things to pass and disappear,

Of hiding, and, what should not be forgot,
Of making things appear what they are not.
Their god is Hermes, guidance by a cloud,
Although of clearness they will boast aloud ;
Successful subtleties to him they owe,
And cloudy movement o'er the truths we know.
This boasted knowledge hides itself in shrouds
Of scientific phrases dark as clouds,
Which only serve to render quite obscure
The ways that Ignorance leaves plain, secure.
Some minds, no doubt, would rather have to do
With a Primordial Essence not in view,
Than with a Person, howe'er good and wise,
Whose presence would be clear when each one
dies ;

And some, perhaps, would give of life the whole
To melt into a Universal Soul,
Not caring for the ills that Soul would gain
By such additions from their own dark stain,
Which, like disease, must needs infect it then,
Contracting thus a malady from men.
But they, forsooth, are spending idle breath
When saying this is what is meant by death.
No; the great Person who first gave them life
Has other ways to end the mortal strife;
And common sense must still be heard when
they

Would try to make His image pass away.
Permit me briefly to express a thought
Which comes to me spontaneously, unsought.



If all from only elements began,
How rose a being complex, such as man,
Or any individual here found
Of animals to mechanism so bound ?
Since only vague abstractions wrought in space,
'Tis strange that any person we should trace,
Or figure, or a substance; all should be
But Essence floating through immensity.
Besides, with shapes and frames who would compare
An Essence unsubstantial, like the air ?
The things created, then, would far surpass
The principles producing them in mass.
For no abstraction, call it as you may,
Can equal what confronts you every day
In real beings, personal and free,
Enjoying each its own felicity.
From all we see and feel, therefore, we know
That from a Person the great whole must flow.
Yes, Personality elsewhere must be
And like what on this wondrous earth we see.
We can't escape to find ourselves alone
With elements, supposing they were known,
As this vain knowledge now would oft pretend,
Assuming that in them each life will end.
I know not if you feel this now as I,
To whom 'tis clear as if before the eye.
Yet how grave men will differ from us most,
And of dispelling ignorance still boast !

Let Paley lead us through the sapient throng,
So sily hinting what may there be wrong.
He says, " Indeed, I do almost suspect
The cause of these philosophers' defect
Is, that the proof of what we chiefly prize
In popular and vulgar wisdom lies.
Though that arises from its cogency,
They deem it almost puerility.
Habitually searchers of invention,
They feel a wish they do not ever mention
To seek originality, and then
Adopt solutions unlike other men,
With common reasons not to be content,
To grasp at aught else being ever bent ;
And those most conscious of superior strength,
In this wild course proceed to greatest length,
Till the result of their vast, potent mind,
Is to grow callous, obstinate, and blind."
So they mistake for a fine promised land
A shifting, hollow, barren bank of sand,
Or else a waste that's washed o'er by the main;
And what see we or hear we there again ?

Illusive gleams,
Discordant screams,
Disdain that glows,
Stern Pride that grows,
At last regrets,
That each thing frets,
And cries for more and more.



But lo! pure Ignorance descends ;
And see how soon false Knowledge ends ;
 See tortured minds revive ;
Then Curiosity expires,
 With all its dreams and mad desires ;
 While Wisdom will survive.
The holy maid, Pure Ignorance, is found
To be for sages too the guide most sound.

But when celestial truths invite the mind,
Oh, then how greatly wise this maid you find !
So, when the schoolmen old did take their flight,
By her escorted, how their course was bright !
Saint Victor's Abbey—Richard, Hugo knew,
Who with her high above all mortals flew.
Anselmus, Scot, Erigena, and Dun,
To her did owe the safety they had won.
Sweet Bonaventure and Saint Thomas deep,
With her, when soaring highest, aye would keep.
Giles of Colonna, Gerson, and the rest
Of the great mystic throng, knew she was best.
It was Saint Gregory the Great who said,
“ The more you know within your heart and head,
Ponder the more you should—yes, even so,
That which while here with us you cannot know.”
We know sufficient for our purpose here ;
Beyond that purpose, nought distinct and clear.
Those who fair Ignorance disdain, reject,
Know just enough to form another sect,

But never to make difficulties cease,
Or from their tangled chains obtain release.
This damsel's sage can feel, as well as they,
The darkness shrouding the whole mortal way;
But then he can distinguish falsehood plain
From knowing not, of which all fools complain.
To all their Hows and Whys he answers not;
And all things unessential are forgot.
He says, with Saint Augustin⁶, that to him
"What Moses wrote proves often wholly dim,
Suggesting questions to which no reply
Is oft the wisest course he can descry.
But all those words he does admire the more
For having such a rich reserve in store,
So few things being copiously express'd,
While humbly, as was fitting, are the rest.
Were he himself to write what should possess
Supreme authority in verbal dress,
He too would wish all words so to arrange
That they should aye maintain the widest range
Of meaning, never to one sense confined,
Forbidding others to the human mind.
Oh! far from him to think a Prophet such,
Had not received from God's high grace as much;
Yes, Moses had in view, when he did write,
Each farthest truth which still escapes our sight—
What later times may yet disclose to view,
Though pert, false Knowledge thought it **was not**
true."

⁶ Confess. xii. 31.

Nor is it only for Creation's page
That such high wisdom shows this maiden's sage.
For holy Ignorance will prove his guide
Through truths of which the range is ever wide,
As darkly seen, and known but here in part,
Endow'd with power to direct his heart.
Atonement, goodness, justice, all combined,
Will fret no sense of truth within his mind.
No glosses popular which seem to rest
On an assumption which he ne'er express'd,
That truths mysterious he can understand,
Either his faith, or mind, or heart command.
For he knows all is infinite, and higher
Than what the noblest heart and mind admire;
Though still he knows 'tis mystery explains
That which without it darkness pure remains;
For "Knowledge" disputations blinder grows
Than Ignorance profess'd, that nothing knows.
His reason on an adamantine rock,
All vaunts of deeper knowledge he will mock.
He knows enough to guide him. For the rest,
He knows as well that "Nescio" is best.

Whether, in fine, you only skim or wade,
Your best director is this holy maid.
The ancients, who all secrets loved to scan,
Maintain'd she was in line direct from Pan,
In fact his daughter, mystery profound,
Although some outward traces can be found.

Prescribed in Eden, to preserve its charm;
In exile, 'tis not she does greatest harm.
On Calvary accepted for excuse,
She need not heed the sophist's loud abuse.
Admitted by the wisest of the schools,
She takes no notice of the cries of fools.
Herself unto herself in silence known,
She asks for nought, contented with her own.
Endear'd to nature, and to grace allied,
She has no enemy but human pride.
She adds a sweet charm to the youthful face
Where most angelic innocence we trace;
For youth is debtor often to her sway,
When knowing how to steal all hearts away.
Existing simply as a native flower,
To win the wisest she will need no dower.
To her, we know, were mysteries reveal'd
Which to her "wiser betters" were all seal'd.
But when to Wisdom wedded, she appears
To add a voice in music of the spheres,
Accordant with that harmony of love
To which the orbs celestial move above.

While Ignorance like this did reign,
High Heaven of man did not complain.
Transported generations stood;
And men grew brave, and wise, and good,
Inflamed with things unknown;
Each spirit as an angel flew,

And brought from the heavens what he knew;
And man did find celestial food,
And ignorance did own.

Oh! welcome then this holy maid,
Howe'er misnamed she comes to thee;
Oh! fly to her ambrosian shade,
And feel the joys of mystery,
Those harbingers of future rest,
Where knowledge, pure and whole, awaits the
blest.

For, mark me, she is lowly, poor;
With rulers now she will not dwell;
Their present cant she won't endure;
Her absence now does prove this well.
For branded and defamed she flies,
And, all conceal'd, to homes obscurest hies.

How could she stay where she is known
As mother of all social crime?
Though true statistics would disown
The false conclusions of our time;
For those with whom she still can hide
Are not less innocent from wanting pride.

Paint Ignorance as black as night,
Distinguishing departments so,
But shrewd French legists we could cite,
Who own that counter facts they know;

And English magistrates complain
Of statements that are now proved wholly vain.

For Ignorance may be combined,
They say, with industry most great,
With a most truthful, honest mind,
And kindness, love in lowly state;
But Knowledge all the while may be
With hateful crime and all dishonesty.

Sweet Nature's Muse is better taught
Than the pert sophists that you say
Have to all themes such knowledge brought,
The fancied triumph of our day;
'Tis more to know the bounds assign'd
To all the wishes of an honest mind.

Oh! where you find each maiden gay
Encompass'd with true woman's grace,
Oh! where you find that all obey
The maxims Time can ne'er efface,
Where men are still good, brave, devout,
With wing'd feet thither fly and lead her out.

Fly to some saint or lowly maid,
Whom he perchance distrusteth much;
Although in her suspected shade
Her thoughts as his are even such,
The same, if all she feels he knew,
And all her thoughts unutter'd came to view.

For she is often, sooth, the sage
Unconscious of it, as if blind—
Such as we see on Sedaine's page',
With Terence's, Menander's mind,
In which so mingled oft appears
Gay mirth, that shines in sadness through its
tears.

Yes, holy Ignorance will dwell
With woman in some bower small,
That sacred maid can rest so well
In any mind that hears her call!
Young Wisdom is her beauteous cell,
Where sweet content surpasses all;
But wheresoever she may fly,
Oh, bid her come and keep you company.

Yes; court her smiles and find your rest
In the poor scholar deep retired,
In the sweet maiden's quiet breast,
In the meek priest, by few admired;
In those who love contentment best,
In whom all pride has long expired;
In all who in dark depths do lie,
Disguised, conceal'd in their humility.

Her voice can restless minds appease,
And grant them mirth, and health, and ease;

' "Philosophe sans le savoir."

Her voice can give you wings to soar
Where mental sorrows pain no more;
Our minds o'er mankind she can raise,
With angels to begin the praise,
That so from high tuneful choirs sound,
Where nought is lost and all is found.

PAGAN TOMBS.

THE human soul has aye a voice profound,
Which like the Christian oracles will sound.
Oft heard amidst the fields the Muses haunt
Is its mysterious and immortal chant;
As if to prove the justice of the word
Which from Tertullian's lips the world first heard,
That naturally Christian it must be
In heathens, as still now in you and me.

While straying lately through the Grecian flowers
That so perfume the anthologic bowers,
It struck me, as I pensive pass'd along,
That echoes there might prompt a plaintive song³.


³ "Il est permis d'insister sur la simplicité de l'art Grec, sur cette naïveté dans le sentiment et dans l'expression qui se joint bien à la grace et qui ajoute aussi au pathétique et à la grandeur."—SAINTE BEUVE, *Portraits, &c.*, tom. iii.

I seem'd to wander where the ancient dead
Had still their lonely and impressive bed.
Methought the very tombs I there could find
While leaves did fall before th' autumnal wind.
Oh ! let us enter and observe them near ;
For tones they utter which should now be dear,
Instructive too, that present men might teach
To mark the fall of many now whose speech
Is far less noble, natural, and true,
Denoting views that mark the systems new
Which contradict the truth reveal'd, yea, more,
What mankind felt and knew in days of yore.
The Church did guard at Eliscamp with care
The tombs of pagans that were mouldering there ;
Nor would she sanction thoughts that will disdain
Their epitaphs, wherever they remain.
Oh ! far from us the harsh fanatic's pride,
That would their relics from our hearts divide.
Refer them to another Judge we must ;
But after all they are our kindred's dust.

So, walking humbly, gazing on the ground,
Affecting lines as witnesses are found.
Now pause with me—observe this ancient grave ;
He who once lay within it was a slave,
For so it may be well we should begin
With what attests an ancient human sin,
That later without sorrow we may find
What can instruct and elevate the mind.

"I am a slave," we read upon the stone,
"But thanks, O master, a free tomb I own.
Oh! mayest thou live long without a tear;
And when thou too, grown old, must needs come
here,
I will be thine, as formerly, for ever;
Nor me from thee shall Pluto even sever."
Another monument denotes the same
Affection; like the last, it bears no name.
"Our destiny is changed; for it is me,
O master, 'tis your slave that here you see
Now filling this sad tomb you did intend
For your own limbs when dead, and for your end.
Since, as I toil'd, the ground above gave way,
So I myself within it buried lay.
This Hades the place of sojourn is not
Painful to me, contented with my lot.
Although so far from where the sun does shine,
Here I shall live, for ever, ever, thine."

Observe we yet another as we pass;
Such epitaphs may shame ourselves, alas!
"Eudemon raised this tomb to Denis dear—
Comrade o'er whom the Muses hover'd near.
This gift of friendship, of my gifts the last,
Receive, O Denis, from me as the past.
Though now it is a sad and tearful dole
Thus offer'd by my grieving, downcast soul.
'Twas long ago I gave thee all the rest;
But this for thy poor ashes now is best.



I gave thee freedom first, as thou dost know;
Though slavery for thee was never woe.
Its pains thou knewest not, for dear to me
Thou, sooth, hadst always been from infancy.
Affectionate thou wert, and good and kind,
Most spiritual ever in thy mind.
Right well couldst thou in cursive letters write,
And Greek and Latin sentences indite."

* * * *

The rest is silence, all by time effaced;
But here enough already has been traced.

Then other tombs attest affection's glow
In all relations of this life below.
So first, it is a long-loved friend for whom
A grieving heart erects a simple tomb.
Thus "Glaucus, to attest long friendship dear,
Did raise this tomb for him who lieth here—
Theognis of Sinope, loved so well,
That of his friend this monument might tell."

Some common traits of human nature, then,
Are traced as if the dead were living men,
Stripp'd of the privilege which makes them be
As if they never spake like you or me;
For homely feelings thus are seldom found
Express'd in letters or on classic ground;
And when we find them, they can move us more
Than all Art's grandeur, with its pompous store.


“Not twenty-seven short years to me
Were granted on this earth to be,
When the cold ground received me here;
And near me lies my sister dear,
Hygiëa, only seven years old,
Whose equal you could not behold
For sweetness and for goodness too.”
It is as if he said to you,
Had you but seen the little pet,
Sooth, her you never could forget;
For she was gentle, was this dear;
Methinks unchanged I see her here.

How true to nature is this youthful speech,
Which still can hearts most rude and distant
reach.

The words are of a dying lad, a ghost,
Who of his sister still alone will boast !

The amiable reflected thus you find,
And only to its own sweet merits blind.
But the next tomb describes it in detail,
When the possessor it is made to wail.

Then, “Aristocrates lies here,
The Muse’s friend, to all men dear—
With fairness judging all things said,
And ne’er to haughty, false airs wed ;



Sweetness and goodness form'd his style,
All guests at table making smile,
Without disputes ; and then to all
He render'd services not small—
To fellow-citizens, and those
Strangers whom no one near him knows.
O favour'd ground, possess with joy
Him who such graces did employ.”

As through graves thus we tread
We would hear but the dead.
So remember that choice
When we utter a voice
That no measure assumes
While we point out the tombs.
Lo ! the next conveys praise
That will indicate ways
From which Hope might aye grow
E'en for some that I know.

“ Laughing, playful, ever gay,
Singing was my constant way.
No one ever grieved by me,
Not one could you ever see.
Never a reproachful word
From my lips the weakest heard.
But I never ceased to haunt
The sage Muses without vaunt.

I was still their loving friend ;
On them I my time did spend—
Named Menophilus, I came
Young from Asia, without blame.
Here upon Italian ground
My remains by you are found.”

Then the next that is nigh
Blends a smile with a sigh.
“ I, who did temper human life
By laughter midst its tedious strife,
Philistion, of the State of Nice,
Who thus from woe gave some release,
Am buried where this tomb you see,
Sad leavings of life’s comedy.
I used to play the dead, know thou,
But never half so well as now.”

But walk we on in silence; for our breath
Would only mar the tenderness of death.

“ Column that supports a bust
Say, Beneath me lies the dust
Of Theodotus now here,
Little tiny boy most dear;
Who unto his father cries,
‘ Weep not—quickly dry your eyes.
Mortals here on earth have woe;
And it always has been so.
For it can’t be help’d, you see;
So then, cry no more for me.’ ”

Again, another; stop, observing well
How much, in brief, an epitaph could tell.

“Crethis, who many histories knew,
Who always told you something new—
Companion, who all hearts had won,
So mirthful once, her part has done.
The maids of Samos ever say,
‘Come back to charm us with thy play.’
But here the sleep profound she knows,
In which all mortals must repose.”

’Tis Love himself who seems to write
The next that here now comes in sight—

“To thee, O Heliadora dear,
Though in the cold ground low,
I offer sorrowing a tear
Which down my cheek will flow.

“Tears—pledge of love—thus fall for thee,
For thee who art removed
To Hades, where thou art by me
As ever still beloved.

“Upon the tomb on which they fall
Libations thus I pour,
That memory they may recall
Of love in days of yore.

“ For dear thou art, though with the dead ;
For thee I weep and mourn ;
The cypress now befits my head,
I feel so lost, forlorn.

“ But what cares Acheron for this—
For Meleager’s tears ?
Alas ! alas ! where is thy kiss ?
My loved one ne’er appears.

“ For Pluto has cut down my flower,
’Tis mingled with the dust ;
No tears revive it like a shower,
But moulder on it must.

“ Oh, Earth ! our common nurse, now hear,
I beg thee on my knees,
Embrace her as a mother dear,
Like mothers that one sees.

“ Yes ; softly her for whom I weep,
Still loved as ever near,
Press lightly while she thus does sleep,
And pity so my tear.”

Then words we read, which truth with error
wove,
Invoking first “ the hospitable Jove.”

“O stranger, we beseech thee now
Hear and fulfil our common vow.
Take to Æolian Thebes thy way,
And there unto our father say,
‘Carinus, thy two sons are sped,
Meris and Polynices, dead.’
But, stranger, be this added then;
‘Though slain, betray’d by Thracian men,
’Tis not for our own fate we mourn,
But for our leaving thee forlorn,
In thy old age afflicted thus,
Made desolate by losing us.’ ”

Then Love again complains
In these pathetic strains.

“This little maid, of seven short years, has fled
To Pluto, having truly, as was said,
A wisdom premature; but too much grief,
From which she would not e’er accept relief,
On losing her young brother, although aged
But twenty months, was only thus assuaged.
Peristeris, I mourn thy wretched fate.
But such on earth is aye our human state.”

Mark still another here,
Wet with a husband’s tear.

“O my Poinptilla, may thy ashes yield,
So fertilized by dew that bathes the field,

The lily and the foliage ever green,
Where roses and the amaranth are seen—
Imperishable amaranth perfumed ;
Where saffron nestled and narcissus bloom'd.
May the pale primrose ever prove to me
An emblem precious, representing thee.
When Philip, dying, felt his soul did sink,
His lips approach to cold, dull Lethe's brink,
Pomptilla, thou thy life didst sacrifice
To save thy husband, whom thou didst so prize.
That he might still enjoy his mortal breath,
Thou didst then choose to suffer cruel death.
This sweetest union, broken and destroy'd,
His life by Philip is no more enjoy'd.
Regretting that he lives, it is his prayer
'That soul to soul may be united there.'

Disappointment then cries,
And as if with surprise,

" This tomb for aged folk was made;
A child within it was first laid,
Who lived but till his seventh short year;
Such fatal influence was near.
The father and the mother so
Did lay their dearest Caius low.
O how all human hopes are vain !
Deceptions only can remain."

'Tis again the same cries,
And all raised to the skies.

“ O stranger, 'tis a child I hide,
Who lived four years beloved, then died.
His name was Asiarchus, where
At home on him was spent such care.
His parents' tears bedew'd around
The spot you see, funereal ground.
Sooth, always can we mortals say
Our life is short ; yet griefs will stay.”

Then e'en strangers see weep
At this sorrow so deep.

“ The tomb of Eusthenes is here,
To whom all characters were clear,
Great Physiognomist, who knew
Men by their faces at first view.
Here buried with a certain state
By those much pitying his fate,
A stranger in a foreign land,
He was to all his friends so bland.
To Poets he was well endear'd,
And eke to all as now appear'd,
Obtaining what with him agreed—
That only of which men have need.
Without relations though he died,
Relations seem'd still at his side,

Who did like dear relations sigh
And at his pomp funereal cry."

Walk we on mournfully,
Reading lines tenderly.

"O ye who pass, to you I wish to tell
The names of both my parents loved so well.
The wise Cecropia was my mother's name;
My Father was Theophylus, who came
From Cecrops, noble by his glorious race,
Whose ancient fame no time can e'er efface.
Already Athenais they had seen
Cut off by death in all her youthful sheen.
O'er me the whole Athenian people wept
When, hurried off in cruel death, I slept.
They mourn'd my youth, which could feel love so
My noble loves already they could tell. [well;
They mourn'd my manly beauty, and still more,
The wisdom that I gain'd in richest store.
My father cannot dry his tears for me,
For I had been his chief felicity;
I would have proved the staff of his old age,
Had life been granted for another stage.
Know Phædrus was my name; and twenty years
Of life sufficed to draw from him these tears.
Ah! with what grief I left the lonely bed
Of Leuceæ my spouse to me so wed!
Our little daughter my old parents guard;
But still their fate, I must admit, is hard."

Then mark here how tombs borrow
Much from grandeur and sorrow.

“ Here I repose, an honour’d man’s true wife,
Great Arius, so dear to me in life.
Having ne’er loved another, first and last,
But him, illustrious from ages past.
Call’d Publina, my ancestral name,
From the high race of Scipios I came.
A widow, the remainder of my days
Was spent in sad and solitary ways ;
And children loved and prematurely lost
Me many tears and lamentations cost.
In life, where I such sorrows did sustain,
My only friends the Muses did remain.
From them alone I consolation drew ;
Without them, sadness was the whole I knew.”

Now observe we the scroll
That instructeth the soul.
First, these tender words read,
Of which our age has need,
Which great painters admired,
Like young Herbert, inspired
On his canvas to show
The grave scene that you know.

“ O labourer, this earth that here you plough
Contains still mouldering limbs within it now.


Turn back thy oxen; thy intention curb,
Lest the sharp coulter should their dust disturb.
O'er human ashes sow not your corn here.
Let nothing fall except a human tear."

Winds and seas they invoke
Not the dead to provoke.

"Thou stormy ocean, touch me not;
Keep twelve feet distant from this spot;
There howl, and scatter foam, and roar,
Shake if you will the sounding shore,
But if this tomb you overthrow
Of Eumares, what gain you so?
You'll find within it dust and bones,
And nothing else, for all your moans."

Think of this steadily,
Read the next thoughtfully.

"Yes; graves and monuments have but their day;
And Time decrees that they shall pass away.
The cities and the tombs of heroes old
Not higher than the plain we now behold.
While passing near Mycenæ as I stray'd,
Still more deserted have I seen her made
Than where goats browse; her past felicity
Existing but in shepherds' memory.



A goat-herd pointed to a spot quite bare,
And said the Cyclops' city had been there.
That city opulent had left but gloom ;
And so it will be with the hero's tomb."

O then next observe here
How they teach us wise fear.

" Already near my country's happy shore,
I said, ' To-morrow I shall sail no more.
To-morrow all my navigation ends ;
To-morrow I shall see my home, my friends.'
The words were hardly utter'd when the sea
Became as black as hell to cover me.
That boastful confidence express'd by breath,
Did cause my ruin and my hideous death.
Avoid locutions that involve to-morrow ;
Or soon or late they always lead to sorrow.
For language likewise leaves a long, wide wake ;
And Nemesis, be sure, will vengeance take."

Then the next yields a sound
Still more grave and profound.

" My name? What does it matter, pray, to thee?
My country? Wouldst thou, curious, learn from
me?
Well know, then, I am of illustrious race;
But what if I no ancestors could trace?


I died, and had in life much glory won;
Suppose without it I my course had run?
Interr'd within this tomb, I lie here now.
But after all these questions, who art thou?
To whom dost speak, when these vain words are
said,
As if thou wouldst e'en scrutinize the dead?"

Then quite awe-struck we stand,
When we hear this command.

"Speak, orators. This tomb has closed for ever
The lips which vital breath can no more sever
Of the renown'd Amphiloehus, who, thus
Silent, has no more eloquence for us."

Then mark some things much higher,
To our true faith far nigher.

"In death, and in each circumstance below,
Let words like these be prompt from lips to flow.
'Conduct me, O Heaven, to the post assign'd;
To follow thee will ne'er delay my mind.
If even I should cowardly refuse,
There is no other part for me to choose;
For in refusing, I must follow still
No less the dictate of thy sovereign Will.' "



Then, too, living for ever,
Men to teach they endeavour.

“My seventeenth year I only did commence,
When I was summon'd off, directed hence
To Proserpine's abode. The Fates decreed,
After one race of torches, I should speed
Quick from this lower life's first youthful stage,
Imposing not the long course of old age.
So I, named Denis, in my youth's bright flower
Intent on study in the Muses' bower,
Have Pluto reach'd. Oh! father, mother dear,
Lament no more, nor longer shed a tear.
The Fates have recompensed my pious ways
By their decree, thus shortening my days.”

Mark'd you that with surprise?
But the next higher flies.

“The two metropolises of this earth
Beheld, O stranger, my decease and birth.
For Alexandria and Rome supplied
A nurse, and then a tomb when I had died.
I, who aye breathed to Power Divine my prayer,
Spared from a long old age, lie buried there.
Though a wise conduct, guardian of old age,
Had hitherto been mine on every stage;
I did depart, with joy immense and whole,
To the place destined for each pious soul.


Therefore, O Power Divine, receive now me,
Named Dicæópolis, thus fled to thee."

Then the next is more plain.
With its questioning strain.

"Who raised thee, column? I would know.
Cilician Athenæus so.
The name of him who honours thee?
Muménius was the name for me.
At what age dead? My fortieth year.
Early to me that does appear.
A longer life was needed then.
But death is needed too by men.
A noble language you employ;
I must salute thee, wish thee joy.
Oh! stranger, do thou too rejoice;
To reap joy still is at thy choice.
We who seem dead are not bereft
Of joy, nor wanting it are left."

The same faith will appear
On the next that is near.

"Know, of Popilia this is now the tomb;
Océanus, my husband, built the room.
He, ever skilful, virtuous, and sage,
Would thus his grief and memory assuage.



Now on the banks of Acheron I stay,
The earth so lightly on my ashes lay,
Where, O my husband, I will sing of thee—
Of all thy sweetness and thy grace for me.
Remember me amidst the living still,
And let thy eyes for me libations fill.
O husband dear, now bid Popilia sleep;
The good die not ; their rest is sweet and deep.”

Then another will tell
How with them it is well.

“ Thou, Protéa, art not dead,
To a better place now sped.
In the blessed isles thou art,
Where is feasting for the heart.
There, in bright Elysian bowers,
Thou dost dance amidst the flowers,
Far from evils, O how far !
Nought can all thy raptures mar.
Winter’s cold and summer’s heat
Yield their place to zephyrs sweet.
Fevers, hunger, thirst, ne’er fret
Thee, who can’t this life regret—
This world’s life; for thou dost soar
Where no darkness reigneth more—
Bathed in sweet Olympian light,
And its Lord Supreme in sight.”

O mark one more, my friend,
And with that let us end.
And, sooth, honour we must
E'en this old poet's dust,
Who was (what exceeds all)
Cited once by Saint Paul.

“ O stranger, here I cover the remains
Of great Menander, whose dramatic strains
The Muses loved. Their friend was ever he,
While of Athenian bards the prodigy.
Of me but some ashes has the fire left ;
But, if thou wouldst not feel of me bereft,
Seek me, Menander, in the palace high
Of Jove above, beyond the stars and sky,
In the Elysian valleys sweet, profound,
Where the blest souls their place at last have
found.”

No one seeks here to speak,
For all words would be weak ;
And deep silence is best
As we leave them to rest.
But now all seems explain'd
Why Divine Love remain'd—
And why where was most loss
There was planted the Cross,
Which did reach to the dead,
As Saint Paul even said,

While accepting the will
 And effacing the ill.
 Let our praise, prayer arise;
 Let them mount past the skies.
 So there's rest for the heart,
 As in silence we part.
 Although we leave this mournful ground with
 tears,
 The Cross, "Spes unica" for all appears.

THE CID AND DON ELEUTHERIUS.

THE Cid, condemn'd to exile, took his way
 To old Cardena's convent, where should stay
 His wife, Saint Pedro's abbot being then
 The gentlest, wisest, and most true of men,
 With their two daughters, Sol, Elvira, named;
 Then, 'gainst the Moors, he said he should be
 famed.

While he within that cloister thus did stay,
 It chanced that to its garden he would stray
 At noon, to breathe the sweetness of the air,
 Beneath a vine which grew up trellis'd there
 Beside a basin with a marble brim,
 In whose bright, limpid water fish did swim.

He tried to sleep; but a small bird's near song
Unwilling vigils did some time prolong;
Which, sooth to say, he did not much regret,
So sweetly sang that pretty, wild *fauvette*.
At length, without much thought of what he did,
A bunch of grapes did pluck the drowsy Cid;
He press'd the juice; the skins he threw away
Upon the water, where the fish did play.
As each grain fell, he watch'd the circles fair
On the clear surface of the water there,
From one point thus successively described,
Still growing larger; till at length, proscribed
By the hard border senseless to their shocks,
They vanish rippling cancell'd by its rocks.
Soon, he remark'd, the fish, though lately scared,
Did rise again, and the bright surface dared;
But at each floating skin would many pause,
And, war commencing, grains are now its cause.
As soon as one had seized the wish'd-for prey,
Another came, and then began the fray.
When one, succeeding, bore away the prize
Just from another won of smaller size,
Down in the depth, below, a third appear'd,
To whom he yielded it as sore affair'd;
A fourth that prey would now with him divide;
Each struggled long beneath the crystal tide;
Till, letting go their hold, the skin would rise
Unto the surface, when it was the prize
Of a fifth party, stranger to the fight
Which thus had pass'd before the hero's sight,

Who fell into a revery profound,
Until, aroused by the approaching sound
Of footsteps, he beheld a monk advance—
Don Eleutherius wond'ring at his trance.

“My Lord of Bivar,” said he, “dost thou think
Of these small fishes who thus rise and sink?
Alas! on this thou well canst meditate;
'Tis but an image of your sad world's state.
I see you sad, and sad you well may be,
For this portrays our poor humanity.
You thought of men who thus from one point
 wend,
To reach at length the one and self-same end,
While leaving but in memory their trace,
Which this life's surface will so soon efface;
Just as we see these circles pass away,
When the hard border does forbid their stay.
What are these goods of life while fleeting so?
You should their nature true profoundly know.
And then, as for the fight about the skins,
Which one fish loses and another wins,
Mark, is not this an image of the fray
In which men combat thus from day to day?
What one acquires another soon will gain,
Who quickly yields it, with no less a pain,
Unto a third, who tries it like the last,
And in his turn, sooth, finds it soon is past.

All thus is fleeting, quite uncertain too—
All but great God, who is enough for you.”

“ ’Tis true, grave father,” then the warrior said,
“ My heart to no such goods is ever wed.
Whate’er I gain, whate’er I lose, for me
Is all the same; I deem it mockery.
But glory, prize for a Castilian breast,
Is all I seek for, and with that I rest.”
The monk did gravely smile, and then replied,
While sitting still so calmly at his side,
“ Glory, my son! Is that what you desire?
Let’s see if you or I should that admire.
What is the certainty of such a thing,
Which man’s uncertain judgment sole can bring?
And when obtain’d, what is it? simply say,
How surely, quickly does it pass away!
Poets and heroes seek it aye, and then
Their peace, their blood they give, the hapless
men!
And what awaits them, once within the tomb,
Where, sooth, for glory there is scarcely room?
But then their ashes will more softly lie.
What! when the soul so far away must fly,
Whither man’s glory never can arrive,
Whatever else may even there survive?
Then where—in what place stays this glory
vain?
Upon the earth. And what is this again?

A point in incommensurable space,
Which through eternal ages leaves no trace.
They say the pride of man itself is great.
Methinks the saying will admit debate.
It is its littleness surprises me,
That with so little can contented be.
We blame not then the greatness of such pride,
But its excessive littleness deride.
How much more vast and noble is the thought
Of Christians who eternal joys have sought ?
All pleasures everlasting, just, and good,
The ' summum bonum ' being understood."
He paused, as if to wait the Cid's reply,
Who started up and said, though with a sigh,
" This happiness incomparable, how
Can any man—can I secure it now ?"
The monk smiled still more sweetly than at first ;
And from his lips these words celestial burst,—
" Yes, my fair son, by goodness 'neath the cross ;
But as for all your glory ! it is dross."

Then, hurried by a movement quite divine
Which from his heart within his eyes did shine,
The Cid did kneel, and make confession pure,
That he that good immortal might secure.
Absolved he stood, and drew his Tironade,
And to its cross uplifted his vow made.
" By this grand sign of Christ's death now I
swear,
For goodness henceforth will I only dare.

Within my heart I nourish'd secret rage,
Which in Alphonso's death I would assuage,
For driving me to exile. That is past—
Deliver'd so, I find myself at last.
I pardon thus my king; and henceforth he
Shall find his good is what rejoices me.
Yes, good for evil I will now repay,
And such shall ever be my glory's way."

He kept his word; departing; never did
Men hear a word of anger from the Cid.
And when he took Valencia from the Moors,
The fame of "Foe-forgiven" still endures;
When Alvar Fanez to the king did say
That at his feet the town recover'd lay;
For thither went he, at the Cid's command,
To yield the city and his homage grand.
So learn from this how every thing can be
A source of thoughts that last eternally.

ALPHONSO THE SAGE.

KING Don Alphonso, named the Sage,
Thy grief no crown can e'er assuage!
Disquietude, and years, and sorrow,
Now promise thee no bright to-morrow.

Thy soul is lofty, courage high,
Yet what is left thee but a sigh?
Alas! poor father, now thy son
Has a base treason thought and done!
Thy Sancho thou didst name the brave;
Against thee foully does he rave.
Thy son revolted, kingdoms lost,
Thy heart is now with tempests toss'd!
But other news arrives to say
That son is dying, far away.

Alphonso, hiding then his grief,
In solitude does seek relief.
Within his secret study then
Withdrew, the saddest of all men.
He wept, he sobb'd, he tore his hair;
And this is what he utter'd there,—
“Thy son is dead, that son who down
Did pluck from thee thy regal crown—
Thy son, of thine own eyes the pleasure,
And loved so dearly without measure!
Ah! if against me he rose arm'd,
'Twas by false friends that he was harm'd.
Not in his own sweet nature just,
But in some bad men did he trust.
Ambitious wretches round him flew,
And from the path of honour drew
Him who did think their counsels, sooth,
Far better than his own poor youth.

Oh, Spain ! what hast thou lost in him ?
Thy cup of woe o'erflows its brim—
An infant, best of all his race ;
Thou ne'er shalt see his royal face !
For, oh ! he would have proved a king
For great immortal bards to sing.
O Death, why strike the son the first ;
The father spare, of all men worst ?”

Soon to the courtiers was this known ;
At Court all news is quickly flown.
“ O king,” said then the bravest there,
“ We all are angry at thy air.
For proud Spain’s friend he cannot be
Who so regrets an enemy.”
What could an aged king say or do ?
In secret only will he rue.
“ It is not for my son I grieve,”
He said, as if them to deceive,
“ It is his death that makes me small ;
From him I could recover all ;
But his abettors now, I fear,
Who are around him, many near,
Who never will my pardon trust ;
And soon encounter them I must.”
So thus did he conceal his mind,
While finding none around him kind.

But quickly was his sorrow past,
When his own son came back at last.
Although, when welcoming his boy,
Death envied his recover'd joy;
So then at Seville where he lay,
The debt of nature he must pay.
He pardon'd all; and then he died,
Lamented long both far and wide.
At Seville you his tomb behold,
Next to his father grave and bold,
The far-famed great Saint Ferdinand,
That type of ancient monarchs grand,
Who from the Moors retook that town,
And won a bright, celestial crown.

DON ALVAR DE LUNA.

PART I.

ALVAR DE LUNA AND HIS SECRETARY.

KING John the Second welcomes cold
Alvar de Luna of Castille;
The Constable is firm and bold;
But now his nerves he has to steel.

For Fortune's wheel a turn has made;
Caresses all are changed to hate;
An air to nip the strongest blade
Now chills the man of highest state.

Example common here below;
No certainty beneath the sky !
The tide of life will ebb and flow !
'Tis found alone with God on high.

The Constable, then much disturb'd,
To his dear Secretary said,
" The King to me appears perturb'd ;
His looks and silence make me dread.

" When leaving, I came back alone;
My courtesans did fly from me;
'Tis traitors who have mischief sown;
And the King credits them, I see."

The Secretary then replied,
" An evil wind, I fear, prevails.
Tack quickly to escape the tide;
The rocks are near, so reef your sails.

" For envy follows honour's day,
As shadows bodies do pursue;
You're near the throne; yet fall you may,
As quickly as you rose to view.

" Ambition truly is not dead.
Great nobles restless, wearied, grow;
A sword is hanging o'er thy head;
For true content they never know.

“Down quickly at the King’s own feet
Now cast thyself, and him implore
That thee with favour he may greet,
As in the happy days of yore.

“A great attachment passes not
Without some traces left profound;
No former friendship is forgot
In hearts where it did once abound.”

’Tis thus the Secretary spoke.
Don Alvar heaved a mournful sigh—
“That man,” he said, “should be awoke,
Who trusts in friendships of the high.”

PART II.

ARREST OF ALVAR DE LUNA.

The King was coming forth from Mass,
From great Saint Mary’s Church the White;
The Constable with him did pass
With all his suite, a pageant bright.

Arrived soon at the Palace gate,
The King to him in anger spoke,
“Depart hence quickly; do not wait;
Through you my people I provoke.

"For following thy counsels, Spain
Detests me; so make no delay.
My wrath, thus kindled, not in vain
Will burst, if you a moment stay."

The Constable, though bold, withdrew,
While threatening the grandees base
Who had retail'd what was not true,
To purchase so his own disgrace.

At home that evening, supping there,
Diego Goter came and said,
"My Lord, all Burgos cries 'Beware!'
You should from here at once be sped.

"You'll be arrested, all men say,
To-morrow. Mount upon my mule;
The deed is fix'd for Wednesday;
So we must fly beyond their rule.

"Upon my faithful mule will ride
Both I before and you behind;
My mantle will you wholly hide;
Saint John's Gate pass'd, escape we find."

The Constable seem'd lost in thought;
At last, "You counsel well," said he,
"Let wine and some baked pears be brought."
Then rather sleep he would than flee.

Diego Goter cried out, "Speed,
This instant;" but the other said,
"Be tranquil, haste we do not need;
'Tis idle rumour; I'll to bed."

The next dawn Carthagenæ saw
Alonso de Zuniga then
Approach his palace, round it draw
Two hundred of his armèd men.

Who march'd and cried, "Now live Castille!
And henceforth let the King be free."
Don Alvar all their glittering steel
Did from his window quickly see;

The troop so fine he did admire;
But a fierce archer then took aim;
So he must needs from it retire,
For he would never die so tame.

The fight was long and well maintain'd,
In vain, as still all Spain does know;
E'en as the King had just ordain'd,
Don Alvar did to prison go.

Then to the King he sent to pray—
To hear him for a moment's space.
The King replied, "Yourself did say,
'To men accused ne'er show thy face.'"

PART III.

CONDUCTED TO VALLADOLID.

Castille's high Constable, Alvar,
Appears without the dungeon gate;
That prisoner must travel far,
Escorted with a warlike state.
Diego de Zuniga's hate
Upon his ear does harshly jar.

He's order'd to Valladolid;
But at Todēlo, on the way,
Some holy monks beside him slid,
From the grave cloister of Albrey.
Alonso d'Espina, they say,
Him a right mournful welcome bid.

"Oh, think, my Lord," he said to him,
"How all below does quickly pass!
How ill o'erflows the whole world's brim,
Ingratitude not least, alas!
For all the sins thou didst amass,
Accept the death that threatens, grim.

"Think now of God, of Him alone."
Such now was their discourse the while;
The Constable their truth must own;

He knew their constant holy style.
Then at Valladolid's stern pile,
Men only mock'd his secret moan.

At whose house stopp'd they, would you know?
As three the deep-toned bells did tell?
Alonso Perez Bivero
Once own'd it; so they seem'd a knell,
Foreboding what could not be well,
But vengeance and still greater woe.

Of him by his own orders slain,
The wife and children furious grew;
And no respect would they maintain,
Burning for what would soon accrue.
So then, of what, alas! was true,
He must hear all of them complain.

They cried, "So thou at last art here,
To settle for Bivero's fate!"
Great insults then he had to hear;
As they would all enumerate,
And let loose all their pent-up hate,
Until the hour to night drew near.

Alonso de Zuniga then
To his own house his prisoner led,
Escorted by his armed men;
But two monks stood beside his bed.
So many guarded him, 'tis said,
They needed not one house, but ten.

PART IV.

THE MONKS DISCOURSE TO THE GRAND MASTER.

The Monks, all bent on holy ends,
Would utter to him still
Some words of needful, solemn truth,
But hopeful, noble, cheering, sooth,
To mitigate his ill.

“What happen’d yesterday is past,”
They said, “and what to-day
Arrives, will as the swift wind run;
To-morrow’s course is not begun;
Such is the world’s own way.

“Then what is stable is reversed
By what wants fixity.
The healthy become soon unsound;
Desire comes, but where is found
Its due satiety?

“Sooth, in the vain world all afflicts;
And nothing does console;
All passes, and to come back not;
It softly may caress, I wot;
But ’tis to wound the soul.

“ Without a hearing it condemns ;
The living it does slay ;
It breaks its promises in heaps ;
And he who serves it best still reaps
But ill and little pay.

“ If it do smile, 'tis to deceive.
Do raise, 'tis to cast down ;
To punish it knows well the way,
But pardon, no, it never may ;
It shames whom it does crown.

“ Fallacious hopes, presumptions vain,
No one escapes their snare.
Humility, in corners sly,
Alone can their laments defy,
But nothing else will dare.

“ So why regret the life you lose ?
For you 'twill be the same
Whether to-morrow you depart
Or obtain still another start.
Complaints bring only shame.”

Thus spoke the Monks ; their looks were kind ;
They tried to calm his sorrow ;
They sat ; they wailèd, all words tried ;
Their pity, like their heart, was wide.
For lower'd dark the morrow.


PART V

MONOLOGUE OF ALVAR DE LUNA.

"Well, then, let come," Don Alvar said aloud,
"That death so tardy, so foreshown to me,
So anxiously desired by the crowd;
For each I find is now my enemy.
Let's have this secret, dreaded though unknown;
Let the whole truth be shortly now my own.

"This passage, is it, sooth, as great an ill
As our imagination represents?
But what has caused this universal will,
That to my execution thus assents?
It is my goods they long for, envious men,
Well, take them, say I, what awaits them then?

"This earthly good my body thus destroys.
But grant, O God, it ruin not my soul!
My mind diseased still hovers round the joys
Which now I see were vain upon the whole.
But time still flies, and lo! grim death is there.
Courage be mine, repentance, not despair."



PART VI.

CONDEMNATION OF ALVAR DE LUNA.

Say fifteen hundred, and add fifty-two,
And then the year is well mark'd out for you,
Elapsèd since the great birth of God's own Son,
Who has salvation for the whole world won.
The President, the Auditors, and all
The royal Senate did for trial call
Don Alvar, named de Luna, once so dear
To King Don John, as you did lately hear.
View'd and review'd by all, examined well,
Their sentence quite unanimous they tell—
A cruel sentence, which confiscates all
The riches, dignities of him they call
Spain's Constable, Grand Master of Saint James,
Saint Stephen's Count, with many other names,
Such as Truxillo's Duke; and then, they say,
Unto the Crown all these must pass away.
And then, "attentive to his many crimes,"
They add, "committed, too, at sundry times ;
We order that, a herald riding first,
Proclaiming deeds to punish which all thirst,
He should be thus conducted to the square
Where market-folk on market-days repair,
And lest mobs at a gentleman should scoff,
He there should only have his head cut off,

Which head for nine days should be seen to
swing,
That all may view the justice of the King."
Then to the poor Grand Master would they say,
How all had pass'd upon that fatal day;
For in Alonso Zuniga's hotel
He still lay guarded as in prison cell.
Then, hearing them, he said with air serene,
"Not satisfied is yet the King, I ween.
But I myself am paid as I deserve;
Though now 'tis fitting that my soul I serve."
Then he confess'd, received Communion too,
As all good dying Christians ever do.
Then feeling weak, they brought him wine and
bread,
With cherries, of which some he ate, 'tis said.
Then, seated on a chair, he waited death,
Deep, pensive, but consoled till latest breath.

PART VII.

ALVAR DE LUNA PROCEEDING TO HIS DEATH.

"Now farewell, honours of the King!
Adieu, each hopeful tie,
Which yesterday consoled my heart,
And which to-day I see depart,
And leave me here to die!

“I grounded on the world my hopes,
Which finish now with me.
Of him who highest mounts, the fall
Is lowest, so as to appal
The soul of Misery.

“Who would not trust a King’s sweet words?
Oh! master, King Don John,
Why are thy favours like the cloud
Which mountain-tops at dawn will shroud,
And are so quickly gone?

“When once the sun has touch’d their mist,
They vanish to the eye;
So, raised by thy all potent sway,
My golden honours pass away;
Just such a cloud was I.

“’Twas thou that form’d me what I was,
The creature of thy care;
And now thou dashest to the ground
Me, as if, sooth, thou just hadst found
I was but sordid ware.

“How oft I sign’d with my poor hand
What should employ the breath
Of all men to applaud thy mind;
And now, the first time thou hast sign’d,
’Tis sentence of my death!

"Thou now condemnest me. I go
With pleasure to my fate.
Content thy envy; cut the blade
Which thou mad'st grow from lowest shade;
But God alone is great."

Now this is what Don Alvar said
When he came forth to die;
The morning air did seem to please,
To yield a moment's joy and ease,
As onwards he pass'd by.

PART VIII.

THE EXECUTION OF ALVAR DE LUNA.

'Twas morning on the Wednesday,
At nine, he takes his mournful way
Through the long, narrow, crowded streets
Of Valladolid grave;
A herald the beholders greets;
His harsh, dull cry their hearing meets,
As from an owlet's cave.

"Ho! be it known," he says, "to all,
The King to punishment does call
The man who now does follow me,
As traitor to the crown

Of high Castille; its servants, we
His faithless head cut off must see,
And shown to all the town."

So through the street of Franks they ride,
By that of Cantarranas wide;
Then that of Cortanilla they
Do pass, and lo! the square
Where the dark, fatal scaffold lay;
While multitudes did throng the way;
And, lo! they halted there.

Then from his mule did quick alight
The Constable, a piteous sight!
And mount upon the wooden stand,
On which a cross was raised.
Tapers of yellow wax broad spann'd
Did burn, as if with mourning grand;
While all stood pale, amazed.

Before the cross he lowly bow'd;
He kiss'd it there before the crowd,
As if his passion to assuage,
And then walk'd to and fro.
Till to Morales, his young Page,
Of his great love he gave a gage,
His ring, while saying low,

"Take this last present from my hand;
'Tis all I have, you understand."

Some scalding tears the Page let fall ;
And then the heart-struck crowd
Began to murmur, and to call
On Heaven with voices to appal ;
They wept and sobb'd aloud.

Seeing Varrasa standing nigher,
The Prince of the Asturias' Squire,
"Approach," he said, "unto the cord,
But to thy master say,
To those who serve him a reward
Unlike the King's he should award,
And not like this to-day."

Then came a dark, sinistrous man,
Whose strange demeanour none could scan ;
With rope in hand he near him stands.

Don Alvar ask'd him why.
"'Tis but to bind your Lordship's hands."
The victim gave him ribbon bands,
Which round his neck did lie.

Then, when upon a pole raised near
An iron hook he saw appear,
He ask'd again why it was so ?
The other simply said,
"If, sooth, your Lordship all must know,
'Tis that your head may nine days show
As soon as you are dead."

“When once my soul has fled away,”
He said, “Then do what just you may.”
And then his neck he tried to bare ;
And then he knelt him down.
To Jesus then he made his prayer,
That he might soon be with Him where
Are those whom He does crown.

The awful minister of law
His sword did from the scabbard draw ;
And skilful, truly, was the blow !
One moment saw the end
Of this brave noble, famous so,
Who did such sudden ruin know
By him who was his friend.

To bury him they had to lay
A basin on the public way,
That all who pass’d might follow rules,
To drop some coppers down.
Oh, ponder this, ambitious fools !
And ne’er become subservient tools
To one who wears a crown.

KING DON SEBASTIAN OF PORTUGAL.


Oh! ask not what the lady feels,
Who is of rank and lin'age high,
Down whose soft cheek the tear-drop steals,
And from whose breast escapes the sigh,

As, gazing on the stormy deep,
She sees stretch'd out the troubled fleet
By which the King hopes soon to reap
The glorious prize, for courage meet.

'Tis Don Sebastian who commands;
Now half unfurl'd are all the sails,
To quit fair Lisbon's Christian strands
For shores where Moorish force prevails.

And as the north wind drives the spray
O'er long vast waves that rage and swell,
Her breast, more troubled, does but say,
" 'Tis grand, and all may yet be well.

What can resist heroic youth
(Hush, my low, vague and abject fears!)
That fights for justice and for truth,
As King Sebastian now appears?"



She sees the martial, proud array,
The glittering armour of the knights,
All whose bright breasts the cross display,
With "tokens" too, for Love has rights.

But then the lady also sees
A blood-red standard on the poop
Of the King's galleon, which the breeze
Flutters; and then her spirits droop.

She says yet, when the anchors weigh,
"What can resist heroic youth"—
Her lips, and not her feelings, say—
"That fights for justice and for truth?"

She sees the mantles, cloth of gold,
The brilliant medals and the chains,
The jewels, more than could be told;
And yet, somehow, her heart complains.

For he, too, is amongst them there,
Who is her life, her soul, and all.
As yet she had not said a prayer;
For him no ruin can befall.

"What can resist heroic youth,"
Was still her fierce and hopeful cry,
"That fights for justice and for truth?
His death, I know, cannot be nigh."

They now depart, the trumpets sound ;
The midshipmen aloft do fly.
'Tis cries and bustle all around ;
Some sails must breast the raging sky.

“ God grant,” she said at last, “ that thou
May'st soon return, great glory won ;
Oh, such is still my anxious vow,
When thou thy noble course hast run.

But what resists heroic youth,”
She added still, to brace her heart,
“ That fights for justice and for truth?”
When she did see them so depart.

Oh! ask me not to sing the fray,
The dreadful combat, fierce and long,
'Twas fought so distant, far away ;
Besides, in darkness ends the song.

Impenetrable darkness all,
Concealing Don Sebastian's end,
Involves whatever did befall
Him who had thus so true a friend.

Some say he perish'd in the fight ;
Then others confidently hold
That he escaped that very night,
And him they might again behold.

And one of these did long maintain
That he had even found the King;
But 'twas an arch pretender vain,
Of whom forsooth no bard would sing.

But years roll'd on, and never more
Did Portugal that hero see;
A bygone thing in days of yore,
That lady found he proved to be.

'Twas not heroic youth that proved
Resistless, as she thought and said;
But him who with such truth she loved,
Doubtless amidst the Moors was dead.

Yet she would question and command,
"Where lies my love? Ah, let me know."
Then each would in sad silence stand,
Or say but, "Where lies last year's snow?"

THE SEVEN INFANTS OF LARA.

PART I.

OH the brave, gallant, far-famed knight,
Rodrig de Lara, who did fight
Five thousand Moors, and conquer'd then,
With but three hundred Spanish men!

Ah! why upon that glorious field
Did he not die—his spirit yield?
For then he would have been well-famed,
And not, as now, for ever shamed
With that black, hateful treason-stain
Of having seven nephews slain,
Infants of Lara, whom he made
His victims, to the Moor betray'd—
Yea, sold their heads, and thus did steep
His soul in crime for words too deep.
Alas! of many might we say,
'Twere well if they had pass'd away
Before the dark hour when they fell,
And wrought around themselves a hell!

But lo! a joyful day is here,
And Donna Lambra will appear,
His beauteous bride at Burgos now,
Which town shall hear the marriage vow.
For seven weeks will the *fêtes* endure,
Brilliant and gay, you may be sure.
At Salas will be held the “morrrows,”
But these, alas! will end in sorrows.

Called to the *fête* is all Navarre,
And with Castille, both near and far.
The inns o'erflow, and yet, cry some,
“The seven Infants are not come.”
Alas, the sad and fatal cry!
Wait but a little; by and by

They come. Hurrah! now them behold!
To meet them walks their mother old,
Sage Donna Sancha, to the plain.
Now who will of delay complain?
"Oh, welcome! gallant sons," said she;
"May your arrival bring us glee!"
"May joy," they cried, "on thee still rest,
O Donna Sancha, mother best."
They kiss'd her hands; while all their faces
Did feel the glow of her embraces,
While one of them, he knew not why,
Thought that she heaved a short sad sigh;
Gonzalvo, youngest of them all,
Felt on his cheek her hot tear fall.
"Quick! turn your horses, sons," she said,
And be to Cantarranas sped;
Take rest in that suburban inn;
But, oh, be sage,—that hall within,
Stay there; for in all *fêtes* like these
Strange, bloody quarrels oft one sees.
For our dear Lady Mary's sake
Be prudent, and my counsel take.

The Infants rode to that hotel
Prepared for them, where all seem'd well.
On tables spread the viands lay;
They dine; and then at cards they play;
All but Gonzalvo, who would ride,
And caracole with youthful pride.
Then in the open square did stand

His uncle, Rodriguez the Grand,
Who shot his arrows through the sky,
That o'er a tower they might fly.
Gonzalvo watch'd, and sent at last
A shaft his uncle's far surpass'd;
The Bride then, Donna Lambra, spoke;
"This boy," she said, "does me provoke.
Let women love now whom they will;
But my own knight is worth more still
Than any four of Sala's men."
But Donna Sancha, angry then,
Cried "Silence, Donna Lambra, now,
If my sons heard thee here, I vow
They'd kill him—ay, before thy face."
Cried Lambra, "Thou dost but disgrace
Thy sex, and, like a fruitful sow,
Show seven young sons around thee now."
Gonzalvo heard her, and exclaim'd—
"Speak one word more, and you are shamed!
I'll cut your robe above your knee,
That whoso likes may farther see."
Then Donna Lambra wept; when came
Don Rodriguez, who bade her name
The daring and uncourteous wight
Who now had caused those tears so bright.

PART II.

Ruy Velasquez de Lara's name
Is fraught with an eternal shame;
For to Cordova he has sent
Gonçalo Gustos, with intent
That Almanzor, the Moorish king
Him to his death should foully bring,
That father of the Infants there,
Who all but treachery would dare.
The Infants too he would deceive,
And not one living he would leave.
He said he would the Moors invade,
And for that end he sought their aid;
To the great plain of Petros then
He would soon join them with his men.
The Infants to that rendezvous
Proceeded with their tutor true,
Nuagno Salido, the good,
Who still beside them ever stood.
'Tis said that in a wood of pine
Some future ill he did divine,
A screaming eagle seized an owl:
He thought of cruel deeds and foul.
Sinistrous birds he seem'd to hear,
And this good governor felt fear.
"Back to your Castle of Salas,"
He cried; "let us no farther pass!"

But young Gonzalvo urged them on;
And so at last they all were gone;
For he who loved them as his own
Would ne'er ride back to live alone.

PART III.

Near Canicosa, in the vale
Of Arravia, saith the tale,
Where Rodriguez did slily stay
His sister's seven sons to slay,
On Palomares plain they saw
The Moorish army near them draw.
The crescent floated here and there,
The cries of "Allah" rent the air;
"Death," they all shouted, when more near,
"To Lara's Infants! And our spear
Shall for Don Rodriguez fulfil
The vengeance which directs his will."
Nuagno Salido perceived
How foully they had been deceived.
Inevitable death was nigh;
But all show'd equal courage high.
"Alas! my pupils," then he cried,
"Let's fight and die, still side by side.
But oh! Gonzalvo, whom I kiss,
How thee thy mother long will miss!

Her living portrait sooth art thou,
But glorious death awaits us now."
The Infants raised the ancient cry;
"Spain and St. James" did rend the sky;
To death the Moors in hosts they send;
But they are vanquish'd in the end.

PART IV.

So, by their uncle thus betray'd,
The Infants now are captive made.
Two of their conquerors then went
To lead them, wearied, to their tent—
Don Galva and Viara named,
Whose honour should be ever famed.
Moved with deep pity but to think
Such heroes should by treason sink,
They dress'd their wounds, their arms repair'd,
And then to feast them e'en prepared.
The traitor, Ruy, then to the King
Did news of this reception bring.
Almanzor, furious, sought to know
Why to them friendship they did show.
They answered, "Sire, it is a law
Of war, that none should ever draw
Their lance against a vanquish'd foe;
That is our motive, wouldst thou know."

But, if he falls by treason, learn
The hardest heart, than steel more stern,
Grows softer than the softest wax.
This fight was a detested tax,
From which, if we had been excused,
Our conscience had not been abused,
Which calls our late success unjust—
A victory that none should trust;
And from the conquer'd wipes all shame,
To blot for aye the victor's name."

PART V.

"Who basely acts, no king is he,
As you have acted now with me."
'Twas brave Gonçalo Gustos spoke
The Moor Almanzor to provoke.
"Invited to a feast," he said,
"Hither to you I willing sped.
Received and welcomed, as was right,
You saw me come, a noble knight.
But oh, how dost thou honour race?
What dost thou set before my face?
The heads of my seven sons I view,
A grim dessert, forsooth, that's new!
Almanzor. By vile treason slain,
They can no more our cause maintain.
But thou! but thou! a thing too small
By any name for me to call.

How often, coward, hast thou fled
Before my youngest son, now dead?
More than his own your horse was worth;
And so thou still dost burden earth.
My sons! for you I should not weep
Who crown'd with honour nobly sleep;
But weep I must to think that you
By treason foul have pass'd from view.
What knight would not have gladly died
To save you, fighting at your side?
Have full of joy resign'd his breath
To take just vengeance for your death?
Hot vengeance on the head to fling
Of this Almanzor, not a king?
Then drawing quick his sword, he flew
Upon the Moors, and thirteen slew;
Those only did escape his might
Who found their safety by their flight.
"Gonçalo Gustos," cried the King.
"I do repent me of this thing—
This horrible dessert for thee,
Though each was my great enemy.
If them to life I could recall
No hair from one such head should fall.
Yes, I would now appease this strife,
Although it were to cost my life.
But all that I can give you now,
To grant you on this spot I vow.
I give you liberty to-day,
With leave to take their heads away.

PART VI.

A prey to grief the most profound
Gonçalo Gustos stood spell-bound;
He bathed the seven heads with tears,
He kiss'd each, while the Moor he hears.
No word he spoke; within does flow
Too much for all but God to know.
But now Velasquez was the man
Who through his mind as traitor ran.
At length—"I wonder not," he cried,
"That treason in such deeds takes pride.
One single traitor can destroy
A thousand good who fame enjoy.
Traitor and coward!—for what's base
Is always of a coward race—
Couldst thou not one son leave to me,
Not slay them all perfidiously?
Velasquez, thou indeed hast won!
No longer have I now a son."

PART VII.

Mudarra plays at chess with care,
Aliator his partner there;
Before Almanzor and the bright
Axa, Aliator's delight.

He who Segura ruled as king,
Of whom so many minstrels sing.
That Moorish Prince, with love his aim,
Seem'd quite neglectful of the game :
With trembling hand and wand'ring eyes
He makes such faults as do surprise.
Mudarra then throws back his chair,
Jumbles the chessmen here and there,
Strikes with his hand the board, and cries,
" Whoe'er with me plays chess, and vies,
Must play in earnest. Although I
Am not a king, my wrath is high
When I receive an insult so;
And this is what you all should know.
Almanzor, taken by surprise,
Then felt his burning anger rise.
He tax'd Mudarra with his birth,
As if it only call'd for mirth.
On this point all are not agreed,
Nor need we their divisions heed.
'Tis said that, when an infant, he
Was carried to captivity?
And still by strangers it was thought
That his true father might be sought
In great Gonçalo Gustos, though
He his survival did not know.
In fact it was his son they saw
A captive to their odious law;
But, emancipated then,
He now was chieftain of their men.

Mudarra, stung by false reports,
To anxious questioning resorts;
Nor did he rest until he found
How to brave Gustos he was bound.
The scornful words half-utter'd so
Led him his origin to know—
The glory of his father's name,
The end to which his brothers came;
Mudarra vows, with silent breath,
Revenged shall be the Infants' death.

PART VIII.

The chase is warfare for a day;
The chase drives all dark thoughts away.
Rodriguez 'midst the woods is found
Where hounds and hunting-horns do sound.
Beneath a spreading beech-tree's shade
He rested in the spangled glade.
A settled gloom weigh'd o'er his breast;
Mudarra left his thoughts no rest.
"Oh, now, if only he were gone,
Nought would be left to ponder on!"
'Twas thus unto himself he said;
For aye some vengeance he did dread.
A man, on horseback, comes in sight,
Who cries, "God save thee, gallant knight!"
"Well, thee too, squire, may He guard,"

Replied Rodriguez, gazing hard.
"Thy name, Sir Knight?" then ask'd the other.
"I am, in law, Gonçalo's brother,
Who did with Donna Sancha wed;
My seven nephews all are dead.
Don Rodriguez de Lara, you
Sancha's own brother have in view."
The other cried, "What! is it so?
In me Mudarra Gonça know,
Own brother of the Infants too,
Whom you so treacherously slew,
Did to the Moor their dear lives sell,
Who then at Arravia fell.
But, if great God be now my aid,
Thy life thou leavest in this glade."
The other started, turn'd quite pale,
As if his strength would not avail.
"To-morrow let us fight," said he;
"To-morrow I'm the knight for thee."
Mudarra bade him more words spare;
He would have vengeance then and there.
"Thou shalt have just the same delay
As thou didst grant that fatal day
To Lara's Infants; so I cry,
Traitor, and foe of Sancha, die!"

PART IX.

Gonçalo Gustos free to leave
Cordova, and his woes relieve,

Retired to his castle old,
Of Salas, where he might behold
The Seven Infants' solemn tomb;
But all his days were spent in gloom.
"Oh, fruitless, hapless trunk!" cried he;
"All isolated, bare to see.
What is more wretched here than thou,
So blighted, stript, and lonely now?
And who is my companion here?
The man whose crime I only fear;
My children's murderer is he
Who now does keep me company.
Out for a hunting now to day,
Soon hither he again will stray.
Ah, would I with the Moors had stay'd,
For there was sympathetic shade;
There I still found one heart could be
So soften'd as to pity me."

But fifteen long, long years have pass'd
Since he his seven sons saw last.
'Tis said he was grown nearly blind,
Weeping for those he could not find.
It chanced one day that as he sat
Contemplating still this and that,
Upon his castle terrace grand,
Where an aged servitor did stand,
With whom at times he spoke to ease
His heart, that nothing now could please;

Yet, gaining from the sun repose
For his poor frame that age now froze,
All suddenly he hears a cry,
And sees a crowd of peasants fly,
To seek within his castle wall
Safety from what does them appal.
For lo ! across the purple plain
A cloud of Moors sweeps on like rain.
Alas ! if his brave sons were near
They had not now such cause for fear.
Now is he old and without aid
To check that direful Moorish raid.
The peasants are unarm'd and rude,
A poor, defenceless multitude.
Yet, once within the castle gate,
Which closes, round him they all wait,
Expecting at his side to die;
For from grim Death they cannot fly.
But oh ! what glad surprise began
When the Moors' leader in the van
Rides up, and shows his buckler bright,
With these words shining in their sight—


“ To seek thee is my only quest ;
To find thee is my only rest.”

A white flag, with a cross of green,
Upon his lifted lance is seen ;
A head upon his saddle-bow
Drops blood upon the ground below.

His front then to the saddle bow'd,
His lance before th' astonish'd crowd
He kiss'd, with point upon the ground,
Since what he sought for there is found.
It was Mudarra hither sped,
And who unto his father said—
“The Lord of Salas thou must be,
Whom now before me I do see.
I vow'd no longer a disgrace
Should tarnish thy illustrious race.
Thy seven brave sons, so foully slain,
Are now avenged ; and once again
I view him who did give me life;
Receive these tokens of my strife.”

So all is changed then suddenly;
The castle hears a joyful cry;
From the extremity of woe
To bliss supreme the tide does flow.
“Come in, my son. Oh, fly to me !”
The old man cried, triumphantly.
“My sorrows long at length have pass'd,
And now one son I have at last ¹.”

¹ From whom it is said is descended the illustrious family of Manriques.



THE FINALE.

I KNOW not how, but some dull trembling sound
Of late disturbs the music of my thought,
As if a bell, sinistrous, tolling round
Did waken echoes with disquiet fraught.
The halcyon hours, which at first were found,
To an untimely end seem quickly brought,
Which calls from my soul's depth a faint, low sigh,
Though, sooth, at first, I scarcely can say why.

Oh! is it from the radiance of old Spain
That now these clouds have swept across the sky?
Oh! can it be the lofty, tragic strain
Which lately floated in the air so high
Depresses now my soul as if in vain
I sung of that which prompts an inward sigh?
It may be so. For her heroic themes
Sound often harsh, as night-appalling dreams.


Yes, let it be avow'd there is in all
Of Spanish and Italian glory much
Which, though romantic we may fondly call,
Can of a deep mind scarcely bear the touch;
Since sacred Innocence it does appal;
And oft the hero glorified is such
As makes us turn, heartsick and dismay'd,
To rest with true Love in some quiet shade.

When best, it is a secondary class
Of beauties which such minstrelsy displays;
From lofty minds it rapidly does pass,
In them with real pleasure never stays.
Where Love in some shape does not mould the
mass
They trace by instinct misdirected ways.
The higher parts of intellect remain
Unmoved, however musical the strain.

Humanity, not glory would they see.
Your stilts for limbs seem childish at the best;
But mind on stilts excites their mockery;
And on such props will Nature find no rest—
No intimate repose, from doubting free;
While real greatness makes men truly blest,
Enjoying what simplicity creates
In Nature's heroes and collective states.

What skills it to hear songs of vengeance, woe,
When Love prefers a sweet simplicity?
When ye would have the tide of life to flow
With clearest floods of bright tranquillity?
Why should the arms resound—the trumpets blow,
When Nature calls us to felicity?
And even to forget the famed men bold
Whose course in wild heroics has been told.

Memnon might sing, salute his mother's rays
Where Thebes with noble gates is cut in twain



By the quick Nile, and there might warble lays ;
But great Achilles, thirsting now in vain
For battles, speaks not o'er Thessalian ways,
Nor any longer on the Trojan plain.
Give us Menander and our common life;
Let Æschylus depart with all his strife.

I know that we are mortal, and that days,
Though short, present, as sages said of old,
But tedious, long, and uniform ways
Of strife, which in high legends have been told.
But when in mind through nobler things each strays,
When I the course of countless stars behold,
I soar in song beyond the low earth, where
True love, not glory sheds Ambrosian air.

Oh, England ! back to thee 'tis then I'd fly—
To thy sweet gardens, slopes, and river sides,
Where no proud, sanguine triumphs meet the eye,
But harmless palms, as Art or Science glides ;
Where youthful fancies oft bring Eden nigh ;
Where faithful love in poorest haunts abides ;
And where, instead of vapouring parade,
With simple pleasure we are happy made.

Here "glory" is a word not used, scarce known ;
Here courage means no hectoring display ;
Though chiefly here these plants themselves are
grown ;
While all is done in such a quiet way,

That men all other greatness will disown

But that which please or comfort others may.
Here sweet good-humour lights the manly face,
And Corneille's verses scarcely leave a trace.

Yes, back to England, where at least our woes

Are only such as drop from Nature's rill,
The griefs that spring from love or else from those
Who would not all his strict demands fulfil.

Where, in mock grandeur clad, no men suppose

There should be, all disguised, much darker ill,
Quite artificial, needless, to deface
The lines of Nature in our dulcet race,

Coming as glory, honour, justice sage,

Perhaps as, nobler still, ascetic truth,
To leave on breasts, as on a tainted page,
The stamp that withers ever after youth,
Accepting for its payment but a gage,

Which to pure Nature's ears is false forsooth,
Abhorrent from the faith which it pretends
To serve, while gaining still far other ends.

Say what is grandeur, ye who scorn this bower,

And shun its much disdain'd obscurity?
How many harsh, dark, cruel things there lower!
How seldom tells it of felicity!

It is not there you feel a halcyon hour,

Where peace is deem'd a weak capacity;
We talk of grand, romantic trophies high;
But on each deed that gain'd them waits a sigh.

Ah, speed to us, ye birds of peace and calm!
Fly far away, ye eagles with the owl!
Heroes are less disposed to give us balm
Than to do people mischief great and foul.
Let Love and Friendship crown us with the Palm.
Avaunt! thou stern, greedy vampire or ghoul,
Disguised as aye the world has often clad
The selfish, cruel, and the wholly bad.

Far wiser, real, humble life untold,
Perchance, too, more romantic, though unsung,
As in the common scenes that we behold
'Midst those that here we find ourselves among.
For goodness here is honour—pretty bold
For a beginning—Pride away is flung,
As being of less worth than muck we throw
On some base spot where flowers can never grow.

Here peace is glory, and a lover's smile
Makes dwindle all the pomp of vaunted state.
If the plumed helmet any should beguile
It simply tells that cowardice they hate.
Self-sacrifice is loved: it is their style;
But even this they care not to relate:
'Tis manhood, simple manhood, they esteem;
But high-flown vaunts they count a burlesque
dream.

Nor is this all the difference we find
Betwixt false glory and the spirit here—

For Catholic is still the English mind,
As those discover who will search it near.
That mind is pious, frank, and just, and kind;
And from it Peace herself has nought to fear.
'Twas not that mind which English martyrs slew,
Or from the rock of Faith the nation drew.

Just probe that mind, and each thing that it hates
Is vile and cursed, an object of just scorn;
It may be oft what history relates—
What zealots in their ignorance suborn;
But each good Englishman, for all debates,
To be defender of the Faith seems born.
Perchance, unconscious of this each may be;
But Faith best loves all those who can be free.

Then bliss for English hearts possesses truth,
From being humble, natural, and just.
You see it overflow in all our youth,
Possessing ever faces you can trust,
Contented with so little aye, forsooth;
While age sinks, smiling, to its native dust.
That bliss pervades the town, the field, the air,
For honest hearts, in brief, are ever there.

Then wonder not if seeking halcyon hours
On English bosoms we would take our rest,
Unskill'd to weigh the claims of foreign powers,
Content with knowing that we here are blest;

Leaving to others what pretentious towers,
Knowing Love's lowlands here for us are best,
To yield on earth the joys that we desire,
And e'en the glory that we most admire.

We know what Spain and Italy can yield,
What flowers from the ancient Faith will grow,
How France and Ireland present a field
Where grace celestial does for ever flow.
Not e'en in Moorish lands is there a shield
Through which the wing'd darts of heaven cannot go.

But what dost thou expect to hear from me?
I needs must love and praise those whom I see.

Yes, take us to the Tropics or the Pole,
Man still bears traces from the wondrous Hand
That form'd his structure and his unseen soul,
And, full of love, admiring we stand;
Nor deem us even dazzled by the whole,
As if we could not see the parts more grand.
For every trace of God that can be found
Confirms the Faith that is on all sides sound.

But leave, oh, leave us thus to rest and sing
Of those more near us, whom we daily see;
O'er whom the incense of our hearts we'd fling,
To check which is impossible to me,
Observing but the most familiar thing,
And at its beauty feeling ecstasy—


The human face divine, the field, the flower,
Each item that will yield a halcyon hour—

The beauty of the mind, the thought, the heart,
So much more graceful than their outward shell,
Although the latter even can impart
Amazement when we see how it is well;
Though at but one thing we can glances dart
Which then attracts our sense as with a spell,
While all besides it we must still neglect,
As if, less lovely, it betray'd defect.

Some think that Grecian faces were more fair;
Ideal beauty is to Greece assign'd;
But, sooth, their best types you cannot compare
With English beauty, index of its mind.
Far fairer people than were ever there
In English lowly walks you now can find.
For all true beauty cometh from the soul;
And Christians must surpass them on the whole.

Soft lips, fair eyes, the calm and noble front,
The movement of each limb, so graceful, fair—
To gaze on each with rapture is our wout,
As if the hand of God had touch'd us there.
And then by watching actions that each want,
Which makes men yearn for goodness, will so
dare—

Unutterable thoughts from hearts are rung,
On seeing all—yes, thoughts no bard has sung.



For these sweet hours yield quiet ways and
long

Of viewing all, as with the planets' looks,
As if, while dancing to their evening song,
We feel, what is not gain'd from many books,
Gladden'd to think how little there is wrong,
Gladden'd to see men haunt the fields, the
brooks,

Just as the stars seem glad to see them blest,
From life's wide, troubled ocean finding rest.

How many duties, honestly fulfill'd !
How many secret wishes, all mark'd down
In scrolls angelic, constantly distill'd
From innocence, which unseen grace will crown!
To be as good as fair, how many will'd,
In the great social scale the lowest down!
When thus we think of the vast complex whole,
Quite lost in love becomes the human soul.

"Whate'er lies most within in all we see,"
Saith Hugo, thus defining what we seek,
"Is the true province of all poetry,"
Which joins what is celestial with the weak;
For within thoughts that lowly seem to be
There is that bond of union for the meek;
As when the poet¹ sings of honour true,
Of love's first kiss so fond, and last adieu.

¹ The Poet of the Age, p. 83.

Child of halcyon hours, Beauty is thy sun;
Pure goodness thou wilt breathe as vital air;
To peaceful glory may thy course be run,
To thy own native clime, where nought but fair
Will fill the beauteous wreath for mankind won.
For to reap bliss immortal all may dare
Who here would love great God's Eternal Son;
And those who best loved whom they saw below,
Will best love God unseen, and ever know.

Then halcyon birds, when they are wanted most,
Will sit and brood upon our troubled sea,
While calming down of waves the swelling host.
May they so come in death to you and me,
To quell the breakers on the dark, black coast,
That we may land in sweet tranquillity !
With that hope would your minstrel end his strain,
Which, O my God! without it would be vain.

But who will enjoy that mystic calm
Which souls inhale as a distant balm
While they speed coasting towards the great dell
Which all must behold—I cannot tell.

Who will birds of tranquillity hear,
See swarming around them, brooding near,
Smoothing the waters that round them press
When parting so, we dare not express.
Ah! who can trust this life's ocean way,
Where wrecks will be seen where halcyons stay?

The storms you thought will be now no more;
Calm, it was said, is the Nereids' floor.
And yet cries the poet, Oh, beware,
For Aristomenes perish'd there.

But one fact's sure, e'en while we despond,
'Tis love that farthest can soar beyond
Whate'er we hope for, whate'er we see,
Whate'er we fancy that Heaven can be.

That love from the heart, the mind, the soul;
Not of abstractions—principles sole;
Not of the universe—all contrived;
Nor of a law—itself but derived;

Not of primordial properties more,
Nor forms essential, as when, of yore,
The Greeks used the term—only words vain,
Appetencies which can nought explain;

Not of a fact—mechanical all;
Nor of a cause which second we call;
But of an Author, Person, and Mind,
Which, without person, you cannot find.

Love of a person in simplest way,
Just as the vulgar still think and say,
That love can soar and leave all below,
While its true object can Reason show.

For we love Him with all our best strength,
Who to this pass conducted, at length,

Those whom through life He befriended long,
Till their fond story would suit a song.

That love—common, and yet so divine—
Wafting to light that ever must shine,
Where those who loved each seen as their friend,
Love Him they saw not—love without end.

Then for their flight through infinite space,
Where human ambition finds no trace,
Far beyond all the stars in the sky,
What must it be to have Love still nigh?

Love, with its sweetness, human, divine,
Still low and humble, like yours and mine,
Vulgar and common, coarse, if you will—
But with divine love harmonious still?

For it was not the heartless, vague sense
Of some philosophers, mere pretence,
That bound them to heaven in life below;
Not for their Maker was their love so.

Him they saw ever still by their side;
He was their friend as they wander'd wide,
Seeming to smile on their life's romance,
On each fresh transport, e'en on the dance.

Still in the heat, the cold, and the shower,
In hail and snow, and the summer's bower,

Him they would bless in the storm and calm,
Taught by Nature, that echoes the Psalm.

Yes, for wherever their frame would drift,
Each heartfelt joy they knew was His gift;
All one for them were chance and design,
Blissful on them did His goodness shine.

The greatest of ends is goodness here;
While good to others, they could not fear
Him who inspired with goodness all.
How should the thought of Him hearts appal?

No cold distinctions they recognized
Between the two loves their nature prized.
'Twas real, personal love they knew—
The only active, the only true.

For friends and God their feeling the same,
They thought that no time such love would shame.
But would you witness an instance bright
Of passing with Love from human sight?

'Tis not of Eupolis you shall hear,
Thus join'd with Lycenius, ever dear,
Nor yet of the midnight flash that slew
The Victor that the Olympics knew;

'Tis a tale recent, to sing with tears;
Though e'en what's lowest allays our fears.

Lo! two lovers, united in death,
Yielding at one stroke of lightning breath.

Smiles still play on each tranquil, pale face,
But something more besides you could trace.
Yes; we are told, a look of surprise
Each did evince as the spirit flies.

As if, in parting, they now behold
What no thought reaches, no tongue hath told.
That look once sung, let the bard now cease—
Be yours that surprise, that smile, that peace.

THE END.





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